

BIBLICAL GENRES AND LEARNING DOMAINS;
AN INTEGRATIVE CASE STUDY FOR HOMILETICS

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DEDICATION

To two brides: Jen and the Church.

You inspire me.

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From fall 2001 to fall 2007 I have been a pastor at Pearl Church. Through my time at Pearl Church I realized I love to preach. Through the patience, support, critique, and encouragement of those that attend Pearl Church, I have been able to hone my preaching and pursue this D. Min. degree. For the opportunities to minister, preach, and be called pastor, I am very thankful.

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ABSTRACT

Diverse learners fill the church but the pulpit rarely touches the diversity of learners in the pew. This thesis-project proposes that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically. To test this, this thesis-project assesses and integrates educational learning theory, the Bible as literature, and homiletics by establishing a theological and educational framework, engaging relevant literature, designing and executing a project, and detailing the outcomes. The goal of this thesis-project is that diverse learners learn holistically through preaching that is sensitive to rhetorical function in Biblical genres.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND THE SETTING

This thesis-project arises from a conglomeration of my loves and spiritual giftedness. Educationally I have three primary loves. My first love is for the Word of God. In July 1994, I surrendered my life to the lordship of Jesus on a mission trip in Mexico. Upon my return, I began to read the Word of God from beginning to end. After reading the Bible one time, I found myself thirsting to read it again. This happened multiple times throughout my senior year in high school and resulted in my application and admittance into Multnomah Bible College. Multnomah's slogan is, "If it's Bible you want, then you want Multnomah." I wanted the Bible more than anything else in the world.

My second love is for educational philosophy. This love began the first day I sat in Dr. Steve Patty's Educational Ministry class. The class challenged me to consider how the Bible and educational philosophy intersect. More than this, the class challenged me to consider how people learn in order to effectively impact people with the Word of God. To think that the way people learn is fundamental to their ability to hear God's Word was an epiphany to me. I changed from a Pastoral major to an Educational Ministry major that week. Then I spent the next four years attempting to grasp educational philosophy and its relevance to ministry.

My third love is for literature. My Old Testament Bible professor Dr. Ray Lubeck planted the seeds to this love inside me. He was the first to point out to me that the Bible was filled with various kinds of literature and that I must approach different literature

with different interpretive lenses. This insight opened an entirely new world to me. Using the tools Dr. Lubeck gave me, I not only began to read and understand the Bible better, but I began to read literature outside of Scripture too. I became enchanted with classical fiction, epic poetry, modern fiction, and modern poetry. To this day, I read a broad range of literature regularly.

Over the last nine years I have been involved in full-time ministry. For the first three years I was a youth pastor. Then, for five years, I was an associate pastor. For the last year I have served as a senior pastor. Throughout these years I have been involved in almost every aspect of church ministry. Some of my ministry attempts have been fruitful. Others have been fruitless. I do not regard the fruitful ministry to be of more benefit than the fruitless ministry because all of it has assisted me in discovering my spiritual gifts. Chief among the gifts I believe the Lord has given to me is the gift of preaching. As a youth pastor, an associate pastor, and as a senior pastor, preaching has consistently given birth to fruit that seems to last. I have found the most purpose and joy in preaching too.

To sharpen and hone the gift of preaching the Lord gave to me, I applied to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary one year after graduating from Multnomah Biblical Seminary with a Master of Divinity. I applied for a Doctorate in Ministry in a track titled *Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Throughout my study in this track, I have been able to combine my love for God's Word and my love for literature, with my gift of preaching. This has been a deep joy and a true blessing.

Now I stand at the end of this program and all that remains is this thesis-project. I am excited about the thesis-project because I intend to propose that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse

learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically. This thesis-project integrates my love for God's Word, educational philosophy, and literature with my spiritual gift of preaching. I cannot imagine a more worthwhile endeavor.

The Setting and its Problem Described

This chapter attempts to accomplish four things. First, it describes the ministry context used for this thesis-project on a regional, city and neighborhood level. This is important because this setting made me aware of the problem this thesis-project seeks to address. Second, I will describe the problem that surfaced within the setting. Third, I will state the question this problem raises and the thesis I argue. Fourth, I will outline the defense this thesis-project ventures in the following four chapters.

The Setting

Pearl Church is located in the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Northwest, broadly defined, extends from the Pacific Ocean to the continental divide and includes all of Washington, most of Oregon, Idaho, California, British Columbia, and adjoining parts of the Alaskan, Yukon Territory. The name Pacific Northwest is commonly used without definition, although it has its origins in the early 19th Century. Most of the population of the Pacific Northwest is concentrated in the Vancouver-Seattle-Portland corridor. This area is sometimes seen as a mega city also known as an agglomeration, or a megalopolis. This mega city stretches along Highway 99 in the province of British Columbia and Interstate 5 in the states of Washington and Oregon. As of 2004, the combined

populations of the Greater Vancouver Lower Mainland, the Seattle metropolitan area and the Portland metropolitan area totaled almost nine million people.¹

The city of Portland exists within the Pacific Northwest, located near the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers. With a population of over half a million people, it is Oregon's most populous city and third most populous in the Pacific Northwest after Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia. Approximately two million people live in Portland metropolitan which makes it the twenty-fourth most populous metropolitan in the United States.² Situated no more than 90 miles from the Pacific Ocean, the mountains, the desert, and the Willamette valley wineries, Portland is home to a community as eclectic as its environment. Known for all things green, local microbrew, pinot noir, small town politics and a city that "works for you," Portland is laden with blue collar, white collar, uneducated and educated, lower class and upper class, as well as every kind of person in between these extremities.³

The Pearl District exists within the city of Portland. Historically, the Pearl District was an area of warehouses and railroad yards that serviced the central business district of Portland. It was also home to a few art galleries and restaurants. Currently, The Pearl District is rapidly being transformed from industrial into a residential and commercial area. Old warehouses are being converted and new residential properties comprised of condominiums, lofts, and townhouses are under construction. The area is the hottest real estate market in Portland. Only ten blocks by fifteen blocks in size, the Pearl District

¹ *Pacific Northwest* (accessed 2 August 2007); Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pacific_Northwest; Internet.

² *Portland, Oregon* (accessed 2 August 2007); Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portland,_Oregon; Internet.

³ *Welcome to Portland Oregon* (accessed 2 August 2007); Available from <http://www.el.com/to/portland/>; Internet.

expects to fill with ten thousand residents. The majority of the residents already living in this neighborhood are in their twenties and thirties, single, and at a minimum, college educated.⁴ Prior to the planting of Pearl Church in August 2001, no church existed within this community.

In December 2000, a college professor from Multnomah Bible College noticed the absence of a church in the Pearl District and with a heart for those who live, work, and play there, he wrote the following vision statement, dreaming about what church could be for this neighborhood:

I have a vision of a church for a new generation. A church that takes seriously the forms of spiritual thirst of the GenX/Baby Busters/Post-moderns – in short, those in their 20's and 30's, and other ages of similar mind. This intergenerational church would be intentionally a spiritual home for young adults, some of whom would not find God otherwise. This place would not be so 'radical' or 'alternative' as it would be in tune – both reaching into and calling out of this place of life we find ourselves in. I have a vision of a church that teaches the Word with unabashed truthfulness, that is a sanctuary for heart-felt musical and artistic expression, and that connects with the heritage of the ancient faith through classical and modern liturgy. This would be a place where our awareness of the transcendence of God would accompany that of his immanence. I have a vision of a church where my friends and I can participate in the movements of faith – where there is space for each of us to be confronted by God – where the Eucharist is participatory, the prayer is individual... and corporate, and the worship is true to the complexity and messiness of our journey. I have a vision of a church that is a temple, not a synagogue or a hospital. Teaching and healing would surely have a place, but the primary activity would be to truly worship – to truly worship in ways that sustain spiritual health for our souls and call us to love God more deeply. I have a vision of a church that is spiritually sensitive. This place would be one where things and programs and plans and duties would be held lightly in order that we might listen to the desires and movements of the Spirit of God. We would have nothing to prove – no livelihood on the line – only a desire to create space in our lives for God, and an authentic invitation for others like ourselves to do the same. I have a vision of a multiplying church. A church that is a training ground for young ministers to be

⁴ *Pearl District Neighborhood Profile* (accessed 2 August 2007); Available from <http://www.pearl-district-lofts.com/portland-oregon-pearl-district.html>; Internet.

infected with a culture that's been theologically and educationally informed before going out to plant ministries of their own. This would not be a one-person show, but the expression of an ecology of gifts and talents, used and being strengthened for the purposes of Great Commission multiplication. I have a vision of an evangelical church, awash in orthodox doctrinal truth. The careful handling of the Word would make this place a haven and would help us navigate these stages in our lives. I have a vision of a church that would truly honor Christ and reach people who now have no spiritual home.⁵

This vision led to the planting of Pearl Church in August 2001. I was a part of this church planting team and six years later, the church we sought to establish exists. Pearl Church has over two hundred people attend worship on Sunday mornings. There are ninety members, thirty lay people dedicated to ministering in over fifteen ministries on a weekly basis, two intern pastors carrying much of the ministry load, one lead pastor and four elders. Within this new neighborhood containing thousands of people, there is now one evangelical lamp that ministers and reflects the people who live, work, and play in the Pearl District. In my church the average age is thirty-three; there are twenty percent more women than men; most attendees are college educated.⁶

The Problem

One of my primary responsibilities in Pearl Church is preaching. I desire to fulfill my part in our vision which reads, "The careful handling of the Word would make this place a haven and would help us navigate these stages in our lives."⁷ To ensure that my preaching was helping people navigate their lives in meaningful ways, I surveyed our

⁵ Steve Patty distributed this vision statement to those he invited to help plant Pearl Church during 2000 and 2001.

⁶ See Appendix 1: Statistical Survey of Pearl Church.

⁷ Steve Patty distributed this vision statement to those he invited to help plant Pearl Church during 2000 and 2001.

church to find out how they learn. Through the survey I found that Pearl Church is filled with diverse learners.⁸ Some learn a little bit differently than others and value a different kind of sermonic experience based upon the way they learn best. Those who learn through cognition appreciate sermons that emphasize knowing. Those who learn through their emotions value sermons that emphasize feeling. Those who learn through pragmatism value sermons which are active.

These findings raise an important question for me to consider as I preach. How can preaching engage and help diverse learners in my church to learn? Before this important question can be answered, two subsidiary questions must be answered. First, what is learning? Second, how can preaching assist people in learning? Let's look to the first question. Without defining what learning is, it is impossible to recognize if preaching promotes learning. More than this, without defining what learning is, methodology is useless. As the old adage says, if you have no target you will hit it every time. Knight challenges the educational community regarding this issue when he writes:

Why all this education? To what purpose? These are two of the most important questions that must be faced. Yet they are generally not seriously confronted. Educators have been concerned more with motion than progress, with means than ends. They have failed to ask the larger question of purpose; and the professional training of educators, with its emphasis on methodology, has largely set them up for this problem.⁹

The words Knight writes could easily be written to the homiletic community. Why all this preaching? To what purpose? What kind of appreciable difference is preaching to make? So much effort goes into methodology: how to exegete a passage; how to exegete

⁸ See Appendix 2: Educational Learning Style Survey; See Appendix 3: Educational Learning Style Interviews.

⁹ George R. Knight, *Issues and Alternatives in Educational Philosophy* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 2.

an audience; how to outline, introduce, transition and conclude; how to gesture, express, and pause. But to what end? What is learning? Without first answering this question, any attempt to engage and help diverse learners in my church to learn is futile. I will attempt to explain what learning is in Chapter 2.

Once learning is defined, a second question must be asked. How can I preach to assist people in learning? This is ultimately a question of methodology. Each person has his or her own unique way of learning. For example, some learn best through cognitive stimulation. A lecture for this person is an ideal methodology. Some must have their emotions engaged to learn. Music and poetry are helpful methodology for this kind of learner. Others must do. It is not enough for this learner to be touched cognitively or affectively. This kind of learner must put truth into action.

Educational, communication, and homiletical theorists have recognized for some time that diverse learners require diverse methodology. It is for this reason each discipline has undergone repeated transformation to define methodology that best assists the learner in learning. This wrestling with methodology seems almost timeless. As far back as the fifth century B.C., Aristophanes wrote his great comedy *The Clouds* to lampoon the sophists and the intellectual, educational trends of his day:

A young man, eager for the new learning, goes to a 'Think Academy' run by that strange, notorious figure, Socrates. A debate is staged for him, contrasting the merits of traditional education with those of the new discipline of Socratic argument. The spokesman for the Old Education is a tough old soldier. He favors a highly disciplined patriotic regimen, with lots of memorization and not much room for questioning...His opponent is an arguer, a seductive man of words – Socrates seen through the distorting lens of Aristophanic conservatism. He promises the youth that he will learn to think critically about the social origins of apparently timeless

moral norms, the distinction between convention and nature. He will learn to construct arguments on his own, heedless of authority.¹⁰

The Clouds could easily be an argument between homiletics. Textual preaching, expository preaching, narrative preaching, experiential preaching and many other methods have been proclaimed as the best method to preach truth from Scripture – but why? Is the reasoning theological? Is the reasoning based upon what has worked in the past? Is the reasoning based upon communication theory? Is the reasoning based upon the methods of whoever has the grandest church in his or her day? I suppose each homiletical methodology has its rationale. However, a method that assists one person to learn might hinder learning in another person.¹¹

Methodology in homiletics must be as diverse as the audience. To respond to this claim, variety is vital to relevant homiletical methodology. However, there is no consensus as to what diversity and variety are to look like. Some books promulgate using stories, others objects, others art, others encourage dialogic preaching, and still others anecdotes. But it seems to me that these homiletical methodologies begin with the horse, not the cart. They begin with the means of the movement rather than the thing to be moved. That is, they begin with methodology – that which brings about the goal of the sermon, rather than first identifying how listeners learn. I intend to seek out how people learn. Then I will use my findings as a basis for methodology in homiletics in my church.

¹⁰ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 1.

¹¹ See Appendix 3: Educational Learning Style Interviews.

The Question and Thesis

This thesis-project seeks to answer this question: How can preaching engage and help diverse learners in my church to learn? To answer this question, I will seek to answer two subsidiary questions. First, what is learning? Second, how can preaching assist people in learning? Once I answer these two questions, I will be able to answer the primary research question. How can preaching engage and help diverse learners in my church to learn? I propose that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically.

The Defense

My defense of this thesis-project will be four-fold. First, in Chapter 2 I will explore the theological and educational framework that undergirds holistic learning and diverse communication methodology in Scripture. Second, in Chapter 3 I will integrate homiletical and educational methodology that fit within the theological framework established in Chapter 2. Third, in Chapter 4 I will execute a project within Pearl Church that will either prove my thesis to be valid or invalid. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will detail outcomes based upon my project.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Theology and educational theory ground this thesis project. These two subjects are the first two sections of this chapter. The third section describes the intersection of the two in relation to communication.

Theological Framework for Understanding the Nature of God and Human Beings

In the Law of the Lord, we find that God's desire for humanity is to "love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). Jesus repeats this desire in the New Testament and is quoted in all three synoptics (Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27), stating with a little variance based upon the LXX what was spoken in Deuteronomy 6:5. This is the desire of God: that all of the heart, all of the soul, and all of the strength of his children be captured in ardent and impassioned love for the Lord. The Lord desires the whole person to love Him. This desire of God raises two questions. First, what comprises the whole person? Second, how does one develop the whole person in relation to preaching?

To answer the first question, I will attempt to define what comprises the whole person by looking at the nature of God and the nature of man theologically. To answer the second question, I will look to see what learning theory says about educating the whole person.

The Nature of God

The doctrine of the Trinity tells us a lot about the nature of God. In simple terms, the Trinity is: “God eternally existing as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet one God.”¹² This definition contains three distinct statements. First, there is only one God. Second, God is comprised of three persons. Third, each person in the godhead is fully God.¹³

Scripture does not include the word “Trinity.” However, Scripture fully supports these three statements. Consider the statement that there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 reads, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” This statement is foundational to monotheism. It is orthodox. The belief that God is one has been central to Jewish and Christian ideology throughout the ages. In accordance with the passage in Deuteronomy, Isaiah proclaims a similar truth in Isaiah 45:5-6, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.” In these verses, it is clear that God is the one speaking. He is the one who speaks and he is the one who is to receive all glory and praise.

In seeming contrast to the statement that there is only one God is the statement that God is comprised of three persons. While this seems paradoxical and even irrational, it is utterly Biblical. Consider that Genesis 1:1-2 reads, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the

¹² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Michigan: Harper Collins, 1994), 226.

¹³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), 322-332.

surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Before God began to create, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. It could be argued that the Spirit of God is just God in Spirit form. In other words, that God and the Spirit of God are the same being. However, Genesis 1:9 reads, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’” In these two verses, God speaks either to himself or to another. He is speaking in plural form. Whom is he speaking to? It stands to reason that he is speaking to the Spirit of God mentioned in verse one. To answer this question further, John 1:1-2 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.” The Word that was with God in the beginning is described in John 1:14 as being Jesus, the Word made flesh. Therefore, although there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), Scripture makes it clear in the chapter 1 of Genesis that a plurality of persons was at work in creation.

The three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God. God is the one who creates (Genesis 1) and God is the one who is to be glorified (Psalm 34:3; Isaiah 43:7; Daniel 4:37; John 17:1; Romans 15:6; 1 Peter 2:12; Revelation 19:1). It is obvious throughout Scripture that God is fully God. Jesus is fully God too. “John 1:1 clearly affirms the full deity of Christ: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’”¹⁴ More than this, John 20:28 calls Jesus God and in John 8:58, Jesus claims to be God. Certainly, the Scriptures teach that Jesus is fully God. The Holy Spirit is fully God as well. Holy Spirit is the only other name listed in the same sentence with the Father and the Son. Take for example part of Matthew 28:19,

¹⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 233.

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Here the Holy Spirit is on an equal level with the Father and the Son. Finally, consider what occurs in Acts 5:3-4. In verse three Peter asks Ananias why he lied to the Holy Spirit. Then in verse four, he asks Ananias why he lied to God. These two verses change the pronoun from Holy Spirit to the pronoun God – as though they are synonymous names. The Holy Spirit is fully God as well.

Now that I have described the Trinity, we will look at some distinctions between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to understand the nature of God in relation to this thesis-project. The distinction does not relate to lordship, for each is God. Rather, the distinction relates to function. Three acts of God most clearly portray these distinct functions in the Trinity. Creation is one of those distinctions:

God the Father spoke the creative words to bring the universe into being. But it was God the Son, the eternal Word of God, who carried out these creative decrees. ‘All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made’ (John 1:3). Moreover, ‘in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him’ (Colossians 1:16; see also Psalm 33:6, 9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:2). The Holy Spirit was active as well in a different way, in ‘moving’ or ‘hovering’ over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), apparently sustaining and manifesting God’s immediate presence in his creation (cf. Psalm 33:6, where ‘breath’ should perhaps be translated ‘spirit;’ see also Psalm 139:7).¹⁵

Redemption is a second act of God that highlights distinct functions in the Trinity:

God the Father planned redemption and sent his Son into the world (John 3:16; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:9-10). The Son obeyed the Father and accomplished redemption for us (John 6:38; Hebrews 10:5-7; et al.). God the Father did not come and die for our sins, nor did God the Holy Spirit. That was the particular work of the Son. Then, after Jesus ascended back into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to apply redemption to us. Jesus speaks of ‘the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name’ (John 14:26), but also says that he himself will send the

¹⁵ Ibid., 249.

Holy Spirit, for he says, ‘If I go, I will send him to you’ (John 16:7), and he speaks of a time ‘when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth’ (John 15:26). It is especially the role of the Holy Spirit to give us regeneration or new spiritual life (John 3:5-8), to sanctify us (Romans 8:13, 15:16; 1 Peter 1:2), and to empower us for service (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). In general, the work of the Holy Spirit seems to be to bring to completion the work that has been planned by God the Father and begun by God the Son.¹⁶

The distribution of the Scriptures is a third act of God that highlights distinction in the Trinity. In Genesis 1, God made the world through speaking words and according to 2 Timothy 3:16 God inspired the Scriptures. John 1 states that Jesus was the Word that became flesh. John 14 promises the Holy Spirit to come and counsel on behalf of the Word. John 16, promises the Holy Spirit to come and convict all ungodly acts according to the Word

In summary, the Godhead closely identifies with a specific function in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures. In creation, the Father spoke, the Son carried out the Father’s words, and the Spirit sustained and manifested God’s immediate presence. In redemption, the Father planned it, the Son accomplished it, and the Spirit applied it. In the distribution of the Scriptures, the Father spoke them, the Son became them, and the Spirit counseled and convicted by them. Geisler in his work on systematic theology agrees with these distinctions in these areas. He calls the Father the source, sender, and planner. He calls the Son the sent one and the achiever. He calls the Holy Spirit the counselor, the felt one who convicts and leads.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., 249.

¹⁷ Norm Geisler, *Systematic Theology Volume Two: God and Creation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003), 290-291.

For the purpose of this thesis-project, it is vital to notice the categorical differences in function between the role of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures. The Father spoke creation into existence, planned redemption, and sent his Word. The Father functioned through will in all three of these areas. Will is commonly defined as “the faculty by which a person decides on and initiates action.”¹⁸ Certainly, God’s role in creation, redemption, and the distribution of Scripture fit this definition. Whereas the Father functioned through will, the Son functioned through body. The son carried out the Father’s words in creation, accomplished redemption with his life, and became the Scriptures in flesh. Jesus took action and functioned by using his physical body to do the Father’s will. While the Father willed and the Son acted, the Holy Spirit affected. In creation he sustained and manifested God’s immediate presence, he applied redemption, and he counseled and convicted according to the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit functioned primarily by affect. Affect is defined as “having an effect on; making a difference to (someone). Often affect touches the feelings of (someone); moves (someone) emotionally.”¹⁹ This definition encompasses the Holy Spirit’s work in creation, redemption, and the distribution of God’s Word.

I recognize that there are weaknesses to this simplified summary of the Trinity’s functions. The primary weakness is that it truncates wholeness. It exaggerates autonomy to exemplify function. In doing this it appears that in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Word that the Father had a will but no emotions, the Son did things for the Father but had no will or feelings of his own, and that the Holy Spirit expensed

¹⁸ New Oxford Dictionary, 1.0.1., s.v. “Will.”

¹⁹ Ibid., s.v. “Affect.”

feelings that the Father willed him to expense. Obviously, this is not the case. As stated earlier, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons. Each has a will, emotions, and behavior of their own. As Grudem notes:

This truth about the Trinity has sometimes been summarized in the phrase ‘ontological equality but economic subordination,’ where the word ontological means “being.” Both parts of this phrase are necessary to a true doctrine of the Trinity: If we do not have ontological equality, not all the persons are fully God. But if we do not have economic subordination, then there is no inherent difference in the way the three persons relate to one another, and consequently we do not have the three distinct persons existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity.²⁰

Therefore, at the risk of truncating wholeness, this distinction seems Biblically valid and helpful to this thesis-project as I attempt to understand what comprises the whole person. In creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures, the Father functioned through will, the Son functioned through body, and the Holy Spirit functioned through affect. Together, these three categorical functions describe the nature of the Trinity’s work in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures.

The Nature of Humanity

Now that some functional distinctions within the Trinity have been made relating to creation, redemption, and the distribution of God’s Word, let us look to the nature of humanity to see if there are similarities that can help us understand what comprises the whole person. Humanity is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). This being the case, there should be some similarities between the nature of God and the nature of humans. However, before I look at some similarities, let me address a difference. Humankind is comprised of two parts, not three parts. I follow a dichotomous view of

²⁰ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 251.

humankind, not a trichotomous view. The trichotomous view understands humans to consist of three parts – body, soul, and spirit. “Though this has been a common view in popular evangelical Bible teaching, there are few scholarly defenses of it today”²¹ The reason for this is that trichotomists understand the soul and spirit to be autonomous capacities within a human. So, when you add body to soul and spirit, then humans are comprised of three parts. Yet, Scripture does not support interpreting soul and spirit within humankind as distinct entities. Scripture uses the words “soul” (Heb. *nephesh* and Gk. *psyche*) and “spirit” (Heb. *ruach* and Gk. *pneuma*) interchangeably (Genesis 35:18; Deuteronomy 2:30; Proverbs 17:22; Isaiah 29:24; Luke 1:46-47; John 12:27; etc.).²² Thus humans, unlike God are comprised of two parts not three parts.

With this dissimilarity noted, I will now look to some similarities. One similarity is that Scripture clearly emphasizes the unity of a human being (Genesis 2:7). The entire human being is to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5). Another similarity is that humankind can be broken into different parts in relation to function. This similarity directly relates to this thesis-project. Although God and humans are different in their composition, they are similar in the way they work. I ended the last section by summarizing the different functions within the Trinity in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures. The Father functioned through will, the Son functioned through body, and the Spirit functioned through affect. Humans function similarly. They function through will - reason or intellect. They function through body - action or behavior. They function through soul or spirit - affect.

The Word of God addresses these three functions, sometimes breaking the whole

²¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 472.

²² Ibid., 472-477.

person into parts in attempt to get at the whole person. For example, Scripture addresses the cognitive function of humankind. The Greek word akin to this concept of cognition is *noōn*, which is often defined to mean “the faculty of intellectual perception.”²³ It relates to the mind or the intellect as contrasted with physical existence. Luke 24:45 says, “Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.” Another way to say this is to say that they had an epiphany. They got it. Much of what they had heard with their ears and observed with their eyes regarding Jesus came together in this moment. It was a moment they understood cognitively. Another example is found in 1 Corinthians 14:14-15: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.” Paul resolves in these verses to pray with his mind. He determines to involve his cognition.

Besides the intellectual function of humanity, Scripture also addresses the affective function of humanity. The Greek word most often used to speak of emotions is *kardia*. To be fair, at times the Greek word *kardia* means “the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life.”²⁴ It refers to the “whole” person. However, at other times words like “emotions,” “wishes,” and “desires” capture the use of *kardia* best. Perhaps the great Puritan theologian Richard Sibbes explained this kind of *kardia* when he wrote:

God hath made the soul for a communion with himself, which communion is especially placed in the affections (of the heart) which are the springs of all spiritual worship. The affections are well ordered, when we are fit to have communion with God, to love, joy, trust, to delight in him above all things. The affections are the inward movings of the soul, which then

²³ Walter Bauer, rev., Frederick W. Danker, ed., *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 680.

²⁴ Ibid., 508-509.

move best when they move us to God, not from him.²⁵

Sibbes' understanding of the heart as the "inward movings" captures this rich term. Feelings and attitudes nearly always influence and sometimes even dictate why we do what we do. In Matthew 6:21 Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart/emotions/wishes/desires will be also." In Psalm 16:9 *kardia* is used in the LXX when it says "my heart is glad" and in Psalm 143:4 *kardia* is used when it says "my heart is appalled within me." These verses and many others like them use *kardia* to describe this difficult to quantify but easily felt thing called emotion.

Not only does Scripture speak to the cognitive and affective function of humankind, but it also addresses the synectic function of humankind. This point needs little proof. Scripture demands action. In Genesis 42:18, Joseph tells Israel "Do this and you will live." In Exodus 20, the Israelites are given the Ten Commandments. In Leviticus 26 God promises blessings for righteous behavior and curses for unrighteous behavior. In Deuteronomy 27-28, Moses concluded the Law with similar language to that of Leviticus 26. He called mount Gerazim and mount Ebal as witnesses to Israel's faithful obedience or faithless disobedience. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus lays out the great commission and commands his followers to make disciples. Pleas and commands to avoid certain behaviors and to employ other behaviors fill the epistles.

These examples point to times that Scripture addresses a specific function of humans rather than the whole of humans. These three functions are similar in nature to those that I observed in the Trinity during creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Word.

²⁵ Richard Sibbes, *Works of Richard Sibbes: Soul's Conflict* (7 vols. Ed., Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979; originally published 1862-64), 1.159.

I recognize that a similar weakness exists here. In my attempt to exemplify diversity in function, I have truncated wholeness. A person cannot feel without the mind's involvement. Nor can a person act without feeling something about what they are doing. However, for the purposes of this thesis-project it is helpful to dissect the whole person into parts to understand the whole. In doing this I better understand what comprises the whole person and I am better equipped to wrestle with what holistic learning is.

Educational Theory

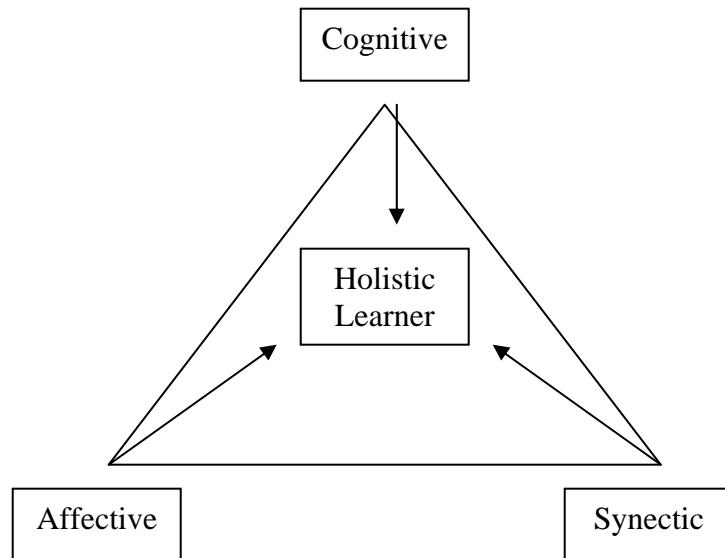
In the last section, I attempted to define what comprises the whole person by looking at the nature of God and the nature of man theologically. In this section, I will see what learning theory says about educating the whole person.

The Nature of Education

Educational practitioners believe the whole person breaks into similar pieces to those noted in the previous section: cognitive, affective, and synectic. For proof, consider many college syllabi. Course objectives are broken into three parts: knowledge, attitude, and skill. Knowledge relates to cognition and the ability to understand, summarize, and critique. Attitude relates to affect and the ability to feel and appreciate. Skill relates to behavior and the ability to do and act upon the learning. Most educators recognize the wholeness of a person and the importance each part plays in learning holistically.

Educational theorists argue that these three functions or domains each need

development for holistic learning to take place.²⁶ To illustrate this, I have depicted the educational triangle below:



Cognitive development is one point of the triangle and includes capacities such as remembering, comprehending, and reasoning. “Cognitive theorists such as Jerome Bruner and David Ausubel believe that for learning to occur, several cognitive processes have to intervene between stimulus and response.”²⁷ Affective development is another point. It is the arousal of a feeling of appreciation or conviction. One of the most effective ways for learning to occur is by means of vicarious reinforcement.²⁸ Synectic development is the third point on the triangle and includes behavior. Synectic development is the observable

²⁶ Chief among those who affirm these learning domains is Benjamin S. Bloom. Bloom pioneered work in the cognitive domain. Bloom is the creator of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Following his work, D.R. Krathwohl and B.B. Masia worked alongside Bloom to form Affective Taxonomy. Lorin Anderson followed suit and formed Psychomotor Taxonomy. Numerous educational models attempt to depict these three learning domains working together. At Multnomah Bible College, Dr. Steve Patty summarized and synthesized these three domains through the Educational Triangle in his 2000 class titled: *Curriculum, Program, and Development*.

²⁷ Meredith D. Gall and Beatrice A. Ward, *Critical Issues in Educational Psychology* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 45.

change in actions that accompany growth. Behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner and his followers have created an entire school of learning that focuses on the importance and value of response to stimuli.²⁹ In the past, each school of learning argued for the value of their school of learning over another.³⁰ Today, such autonomous thinking has shifted.³¹ According to more recent learning theory, a learner needs to grow and develop cognitively, affectively, and synectically, to truly learn. One of the forefathers to this theory was Robert Gagne, former president of the American Educational Research association. Gagne argued that there is not just one learning process. To support his point, he described how learning a concept (cognitive) is fundamentally different from learning an attitude (affect) or motor skill (synectic). He went on to argue for the value of all three kinds of learning, touching all three domains of a person in harmony.³²

The three domains of a human being that require development in the educational triangle are similar, if not identical, to the three functions of the Trinity found in creation, redemption, and the distribution of the Scriptures and the three functions in humankind that the Scriptures address. So what does this mean for preaching? I will begin to integrate this theological and educational framework in the next section of this chapter.

²⁹ Ibid., 3.

³⁰ See pages 35-38; see the autonomous thinking of educators such as: J. Donald Butler, Van Cleve Morris, and John Dewey.

³¹ See pages 38-39; see the synthesis of educators such as: Robert M. Gagne, Meredith D. Gall, and Beatrice A. Ward.

³² Meredith D. Gall and Beatrice A. Ward, *Critical Issues in Educational Psychology*, 40-51.

Integrating Theology and Educational Theory with Biblical Communication for Homiletics

This chapter has described theology surrounding the nature of God and man, and it has described educational learning theory to better understand what learning is. I argue engaging three functions or domains to foster holistic learning and holistic love. With these claims as my foundation, I will now seek to answer the second question this chapter asks: how does one develop the whole person in relation to preaching? The answer is: by engaging all three parts – mind, feelings, and body. Nevertheless, how do you do this? More so, how does God do this? To answer these questions two final lines of inquiry are needed: a grasp of how God communicated his word to humankind; and an integration of God’s method of communication with the theological and educational framework that has been laid in this chapter.

The Nature of God’s Communication

God’s communication can be broken into two parts: “natural revelation,” given in creation (Rom. 1), and “special revelation,” given in God’s Word. For the purposes of this thesis-project, part two will be the focus of study. How has this triune God communicated to a multi-functioning people through his Word to develop the whole person? I will demonstrate that God addresses the cognitive, affective, and synectic capacities of people in Biblical genres as one way to accomplish this.

God’s word is comprised of different kinds of literature. Narrative, poetry, epistle, speech, gospel, parable, apocalyptic, and proverb are just a few examples God employs to communicate. Each genre has its own way of reaching the whole person by touching the

hearer cognitively, affectively and synectically. Good communication touches these three domains and Scripture, as God's Word to humankind is no exception. By way of case study, I will examine Scripture's three largest genres: narrative, poetry, and epistolary.

Case Study: Narrative

Let us begin with Narrative. Narrative uses plot to make its point. There are five parts to plot. "Introduction" is the first part. Introduction, introduces time and setting as well as the main characters. The stage is set in the introduction for the second part of plot to begin. "Inciting incident" is the second part of plot. In the inciting incident, some kind of problem or tension is set into motion that requires resolution. This problem or tension draws in the hearer and drives the plot forward. "Rising action" is the third part of plot. Rising action is usually the longest section of a plot. In this section, characters develop and tension builds. Rising action always leads to "climax." Climax is the culminating point in the story. Here tension reaches its apex. "Resolution" is the final part of plot. In resolution, the result is peace and happiness. Of course, this depends on whether the narrative is a comedy or a tragedy.

Narrative touches the cognitive and affective domains of a person throughout the story. It does this through plot. Narrative touches the cognitive domain by telling a story that the hearer must follow and understand. Narrative touches the affective domain by telling a story with characters that the hearer associates *with*, or disassociates *from*. A story that works is understood by hearer. The hearer feels things based upon what he or she understands from the narrative. Although narrative primarily touches the cognitive and affective domains of a person through plot, at the end of the story narrative touches

the synectic domain. Sometimes it is an explicit touch and other times it is an implicit one. By way of example I next examine two narratives: one that touches the cognitive and affective domains explicitly while touching synectic domain implicitly, and one that touches all three domains explicitly.

Genesis four tells the story of Cain and Abel. Cain was born to Adam and Eve first. Abel was born to Adam and Eve second. Abel kept flocks. Cain tilled ground. Both brought the Lord offerings, but only Abel's was pleasing to God. This made Cain jealous. The Lord warned Cain to control his anger, but he did not. Cain killed Abel because of his jealousy. The Lord was aware of Cain's sin. God confronted Cain and cursed him to live as a vagrant and a wanderer for the rest of his days. This story touches the cognitive domain. To learn anything at all from this story, cognitive understanding of the plot is required. Simultaneous to touching the cognitive domain, this story also touches affect. Throughout the story, the hearer associates and disassociates with or from Cain and Abel. The story resonates inside the hearer. This particular story ends without explicitly touching the synectic domain. Never is the hearer told, "do this" or "do that." However, this story addresses the synectic domain. At the conclusion of the story, there is an implicitly strong urging for action. This is how good story works. The hearer who understands the story with her mind and feels its truth in her heart cannot help but be influenced synectically in some way. The story of Cain and Abel exhorts the hearer to offer the Lord their first fruits like Abel and to control anger unlike Cain. This narrative speaks to the whole person – cognitive, affective, and synectic.

Hosea chapters 1 and 3 tell another story. In chapter 1 God commands Hosea to marry a harlot. Hosea obeyed God and married Gomer. Gomer conceived and gave birth

to a child. Hosea named the child Jezreel as God commanded him to. Gomer conceived and gave birth to a second child. Hosea named the child Lo-ruhammah as God commanded him to. Gomer conceived and gave birth to a third child. Hosea named the child Lo-ammi as God commanded him to. In chapter 3 Gomer left Hosea and returned to harlotry. God commanded Hosea to go find Gomer, forgive her, and bring her home. Hosea obeyed God and did as he commanded. This story touches the cognitive domain. To learn anything at all from this story, cognitive understanding of the plot is required. Simultaneous to touching the cognitive domain, this story also touches affect. Throughout the story, the hearer associates and disassociates with or from Hosea and Gomer. The story resonates inside the hearer. This particular story ends explicitly touching the synectic domain. God exhorts Israel the Gomer-harlot to return to himself, their faithful Hosea-husband. This narrative speaks to the whole person too—cognitive, affective, and synectic.

Case Study: Poetry

As a second case study, I will examine poetry. Biblical poetry works very differently than narrative, but still touches the three domains of a person. Whereas narrative employs plot to do its work, poetry employs devices such as parallelism. Parallelism is a poetic grammatical structure that includes one sentence broken into two sections. In the Hebrew language, parallelism works in one of three ways. Synthetic parallelism is one kind of parallelism. In synthetic parallelism, the second line builds upon the first line. Consider Psalm 2:11: “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” Here the second part of the sentence adds to the first part. The second line

builds upon the first. Synonymous parallelism is a second kind of parallelism. In synonymous parallelism, the second line says the same thing as the first line. It is synonymous. Consider Psalm 11:4: “The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne.” Here the second line says the same thing as the first line but uses different words. Antithetical parallelism is a third kind of parallelism. In antithetical parallelism, the second part of the sentence says the opposite of the first part of the sentence. It is antithetical. Consider Psalm 32:10: “Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD’S unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.” Notice in this verse how the second part of the sentence says the opposite of the first part of the sentence.

Biblical poetry touches the cognitive domain of a person. Parallelism causes the reader to slow down and reflectively consider. Acrostic and chiastic devices engage the mind as the hearer interprets meaning. Biblical poetry also touches the affective domain. The language of poetry is laden with word images, metaphor, analogy, and more. It intentionally conjures up feelings that resonate inside the hearer. Not only does Biblical poetry touch the cognitive and affective domains of a person, but it also touches the synecetic domain. Much of Biblical poetry ends with some kind of resolve that is sometimes explicit but often implicit. By way of example, I next examine Psalm 1:

Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
 but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
 planted by streams of water,
 which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.
The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 1 touches the cognitive domain. Antithetical parallelism forms the first sentence. Synthetic parallelism forms the second, third, and fourth sentences. Antithetical parallelism forms the final sentence. The first and last sentences reveal the contrasting nature of this Psalm through antithetical parallelism. This Psalm contrasts righteousness and wickedness. To understand this contrast, a hearer of this Psalm must think critically and thoughtfully with her mind. This Psalm also touches the affective domain. In the middle three sentences, metaphor paints through imagery the contrast between righteousness and wickedness. Trees planted by water describe the righteous. Chaff driven away by the wind describes the wicked. This imagery resonates inside any who have lived either in righteousness or in wickedness and take the time to truly consider this Psalm. Many hearers of this Psalm have felt the reality of this imagery in their own lives. Not only does this Psalm engage the cognitive and affective domains of a person, but it also touches the synectic domain implicitly. The last sentence of this Psalm reads, “For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Without coming out and saying it, this Psalm implores the hearer to be righteous. It implores the reader to choose life over death, righteousness over wickedness. The call for action in this Psalm is implicitly explicit. It demands response.

Case Study: Epistolary

Narrative touches all three domains of a person and so does poetry. As a final case

study, I will examine another genre - the epistolary genre. Epistles adapted the letter-writing format of their day and that format is standard in nearly every epistle. The standard format includes three primary sections: "opening," "body," and "closing." The opening often contains greeting, thanksgiving, and prayer. This section is relatively short. The body of an epistle is the place that the author builds his case and makes his points. This is the longest section of an epistle. In the closing, the author usually commends fellow Christians to the audience he is writing to, or bids greeting to certain individuals. Epistles then conclude with some kind of blessing.

Epistles touch the cognitive, affective, and synectic domains of humans. The "body" sections of epistles employ logic and reason to make their points. Paul does this a lot. In Romans chapters 1 through 3, he addresses humankind's depravity. Then in chapters 3 through 5, he introduces humankind's need for justification in Jesus. In chapters 6 through 8, sanctification is the result of justification. Then in chapters 9 through 11, Paul integrates Israel's role in salvation with his previous three sections. Each idea in Romans builds upon the previous idea. A latter idea finds its meaning in the previous ideas. This is the case for the majority of epistolary literature. The hearer of an epistle needs to follow logic and reason cognitively to understand the points.

Epistles also touch the affective domain of humans. The "opening" sections of epistles often contain greeting, thanksgiving, and prayer. This warms the hearer to the author. It opens the hearer up to the words they are about to hear. In the "closing" sections, the author usually commends fellow Christians to the audience he is writing to, or bids greeting to certain individuals. This also touches the listener affectively. Another example of affective touch is in Philemon. Paul implores Philemon to forgive and

welcome Onesimus as a brother. To get his point across, Paul says things like: “Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints (Philemon 1:7)” “Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love (Philemon 1:8-9).” “I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you (Philemon 1:12).” Through affective appeals, Paul makes his point. Other epistles touch affect too. In 1 John, John calls the hearers of his letter “little children.” The author of Hebrews calls his hearers “brothers.” These personal pronouns draw on affect.

Epistles also touch the synectic domain of humans. The ends of the “body” sections in most epistles do this. Romans 12 through 16 speak directly to action. Galatians 6, Ephesians 6, Colossians 4, and Hebrews 12-13 all specifically address behavior. Besides just the ends, synectic touch laces the epistles. 1 Corinthians 6:20 “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” 1 Corinthians 7:10 “To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband.” 1 Peter 2:17 “Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”

These case studies of three different Biblical genres support the notion that Biblical genre engages the hearer cognitively, affectively and synectically. One genre might go about it differently than another, but nonetheless, each touches the whole person.

Integrating for Homiletics

This chapter has followed a train of thought demonstrating the functions within

the Trinity and how that ontological reality appears in humans, made in the image of God. Namely, we are holistic but multi-functioning beings. Educational theory captures this truth in the educational triangle, and the Scriptures reflect this in its various genres. Therefore, it stands to reason that a theologically supported and educationally inspired homiletic is one that engages the cognitive, affective, and synectic domains of a person. Based upon the framework this chapter establishes, I propose that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically.

The following chapter presents a literature review documenting what educational theorists, homiletics, and scholars in Biblical literature have said about the ideas I present in this chapter. Then Chapter 4 details the design of a project that tests this thesis in my church. Finally, Chapter 5 describes outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In arguing my thesis about preaching Biblical genres with sensitivity to cognitive, affective, and synectic impact to foster holistic learning in diverse learners, it is helpful to review what others have said about these subjects. Accordingly, this literature review touches on three academic fields: educational learning theory, the Bible as literature, and homiletics. While I consulted many sources throughout this research project, I entertain here only those that speak directly to these fields in relation to this thesis-project. Philosophy grounds the first part of this chapter and leads to a conversation between educational theorists regarding learning. The second part of this chapter is a conversation between scholars in Biblical literature. The third part of this chapter attempts to integrate educational learning theory and Biblical literature by holding a conversation between homiletics sensitive to both fields.

Educational Learning Theory

Educational learning theory seeks out how people learn. Philosophy undergirds educational learning theory. Therefore, to understand educational learning theory, a basic understanding of its philosophical foundation is necessary. Three philosophical schools support the cognitive, affective, and synectic domains this thesis-project addresses.

Idealism Philosophy

The philosophical school that undergirds the cognitive domain of learning is “idealism.” According to George E. Knight in *Issues and Alternatives in Educational Philosophy*, “idea-ism” is a better title for this philosophy because idealism is more concerned with high-minded striving for excellence than it is with eternal concepts such as “truth,” “beauty,” and “honor.”³³ Historically, Plato formulated idealism. This philosophy was a reaction to the state of flux that destroyed Athenian culture. In an attempt to find truth, Plato focused on universal truths that all people could agree. Simultaneous to Plato’s formulating of this philosophy, the Sophists arose promoting individualism to prepare their disciples for a commercial society instead of a communal one.³⁴ Combining Platonian and Sophist ideology forms idealism philosophy: universal truth cognitively understood by individuals.

Idealism philosophy influenced the church. The church was established in a culture saturated in Platonism and amalgamated idealism with its theology. This was most clear with Augustine in the fifth century and continued into modern thought through Rene Descartes, George Berkeley, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrick Hegel. The influential educational idealist William T. Harris, who served as the United States Commissioner of Education in the late eighteen hundreds embraced this philosophy and infused education with idealism.³⁵ “Two twentieth-century idealists who have sought to

³³ George R. Knight, *Issues, and Alternatives in Educational Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 40.

³⁴ Ibid., 39-40.

³⁵ Ibid., 40-41.

apply idealism to modern education are J. Donald Butler and Herman H. Horne.³⁶ I engage Butler in conversation with two other educationalists that apply other philosophies to modern education later in this section.

Existentialism Philosophy

The philosophical school that undergirds the affective domain of learning is “existentialism.” According to Knight, existentialism finds its roots in Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche:

Both men reacted against the impersonalism and formalism of ecclesiastical Christianity and the speculative philosophy of Hegel. Kierkegaard strove to revitalize Christianity from within by uplifting the place of the individual and the role of personal choice and commitment. Nietzsche, on the other hand, denounced Christianity, declared the death of God, and uplifted his version of the superman.³⁷

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche used different approaches to the same problem. After World War II and the continuing dehumanizing impact of modern industrialism, existentialism gained tremendous momentum. Society became tired of the cold and callous cognitive truth of idealism and longed for personal truth that moved them. “Influential spokespersons for twentieth-century existentialism include Karyl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sarte, and Albert Camus.”³⁸ Educational theorists that have incorporated existentialism into educational theory are: Martin Buber, Maxine Greene, George Kneller, and Van

³⁶ Ibid., 41.

³⁷ Ibid., 72.

³⁸ Ibid., 73.

Cleve Morris.³⁹ I engage Morris in conversation with Butler and one other educationalist that applies a different philosophy to modern education later in this section.

Pragmatism Philosophy

The philosophical school that undergirds the synectic domain of learning is “pragmatism.” According to Knight, “pragmatism has intellectual antecedents in the Greek thinker Heraclitus, who postulated the inevitability of change, and the British empiricists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who maintained that people can know only what their senses experience.”⁴⁰ From these antecedents, pragmatism is primarily an American contribution to philosophical thought. Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey promoted this philosophy in their works during the past one hundred years. More than this, the last half of the nineteenth century catapulted pragmatism to the forefront of philosophical discussion. Industrialism, urbanization, and mass migration of populations altered the psyche of America.⁴¹ Americans began to realize that change engulfs life. They needed a philosophy that made meaning of this epiphany, and pragmatism was the solution. Pragmatism philosophy believes that experience is paramount to learning above and beyond idealism and existentialism. Dewey was one of the first to incorporate pragmatism philosophy into education. In the following paragraphs, I engage Dewey in conversation with Butler and Morris regarding learning in modern education.

³⁹ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Educational Theorists Argue Their Domain of Learning

Having laid a philosophical foundation emphasizing the importance of three educational domains: cognitive, affective, and synectic, I will now engage three patriarchs in their respective educational schools in conversation. In 1966, Harper and Row published J. Donald Butler's *Idealism in Education*. In it Butler argues for idealism in education. Grounded in idealism philosophy, Butler stands on people like Plato, the Sophists, Descartes, and Harris to make his case. He states that William T. Harris was one the most influential figures in American education and notes he was an idealist. Butler outlines a two-fold goal for idealism in education. First, to pass to the young an accumulated heritage so that each new generation can benefit by the nurturing experience the previous generation had and not reduce the new generation to the necessity of starting all over from the beginning line. Second, to communicate necessary information bringing the new generation to the starting point of its mission in the world.⁴² The methodology to accomplish this two-fold goal is cognitive oriented. "As to curriculum, there must be much objective content and much book learning if there is to be solidity in education and students are to have a rugged mental diet."⁴³

Butler's case for idealism in education appears sound. However, that is before Van Cleve Morris challenges Butler by making his case for existentialism in education. In direct rebuttal to idealism Morris writes, "How do we best understand man? Do we understand him by peering outward, by first studying metaphysics or the natural sciences or anthropology, and then placing man in this or that context? Or do we understand him

⁴² J. Donald Butler, *Idealism in Education* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 95.

⁴³ Ibid., 120.

by peering inward, by studying his notions about himself as expressed in art or drama or literature, and then understanding the remainder of the world in his terms?⁴⁴ Standing on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche Morris goes on to say “Existential education assumes the responsibility of awakening each individual to the full intensity of his own selfhood.”⁴⁵ This occurs in education through meaningful proposition. “To be meaningful, a proposition must be such either (1) that it is true by definition (as is the case with analytic tautologies) or (2) that some possible sense experience would be relevant to the determination of its truth.⁴⁶ According to existentialism, feeling marks truth. Without feeling, any so-called truth is irrelevant.

In 1938, John Dewey wrote *Experience and Education*, nearly twenty years after his groundbreaking book *Democracy in Education*. *Democracy in Education* integrates pragmatism philosophy with education but *Experience and Education* demonstrates Dewey’s reformulated ideas based upon his experience with criticisms his theories received. Therefore, it is sounder in its defense of pragmatism in education. Writing on behalf of pragmatism, Dewey follows in the footsteps of philosophers like Pierce and James. Writing with authority, Dewey states early in his book, “I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience.”⁴⁷ As a product of pragmatism philosophy, Dewey believes that experience bears the fruit of learning. Butler disagrees and calls pragmatism idealism’s “rebellious offspring.” Nonetheless, Dewey stands strong and

⁴⁴ Van Cleve Morris, *Existentialism in Education* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 57.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁷ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), 25.

argues convincingly that knowledge and feeling mean little without response. More than this, Dewey argues that response is an act of learning.

In the summary of his book, Dewey writes, “In what I have said I have taken for granted the soundness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience.”⁴⁸ This statement by Dewey could just as easily come from Butler’s pen or Morris’ pen by substituting the word “experience” with “knowledge” or “feeling.” All three educational theorists stand upon principles that they take for granted whether it is cognitive, affective, or synectic and they lack appreciation for the other schools of learning. The next section will rectify this malady.

Contemporary Educational Learning Theory

Conversation to this point has dealt with philosophers and “old school” educational theorists. This conversation is missing synthesis in learning theory. It is also absent of the social sciences. The social sciences introduced a new paradigm for learning by emphasizing the multi-faceted and multi-layered human being. In this new paradigm, the value of synthesizing previously autonomous educational schools became not only meaningful but also necessary.

The first to write about this in length was Robert M. Gagne. In 1965, Gagne wrote *The Conditions of Learning*. In it, Gagne proposes something new to education:

How can one determine what learning is? The plan to be followed in this volume is to classify some everyday observations about learning, and thus to identify and distinguish some varieties of situations in which learning occurs. Once these varieties of learning have been identified, an account

⁴⁸ Ibid., 89.

can be given of the conditions that govern the learning occurrences. This will lead to a description of the factors that determine learning, derived insofar as possible from available evidence in controlled experimentation. By this means it will be possible to differentiate several kinds of learning, each requiring a different set of conditions for its occurrence.⁴⁹

Although this statement may seem commonsense to us today, it was not commonsense in Gagne's day. "Throughout many years of experimental investigation of learning, there have been those who have contended that all learning is basically the same. It should be perfectly clear from the present chapter that it is this viewpoint about learning which is categorically rejected."⁵⁰

Gagne's book opened a dam that had been breeching in educational circles for years. Nine years later Meredith D. Gall and Beatrice A. Ward state almost word for word what Gagne wrote:

Why should the educational researcher be cognizant of domains of the process of learning? What need do they fulfill? What functions do they serve? First, they are needed to distinguish the parts of a content area that are subject to different instructional treatments. A second need for distinctive domains of the learning process is that of relating the instructional procedures of one subject to those of another. A third reason for identifying domains of learning is that they require different techniques of assessment of learning outcomes.⁵¹

This rhetoric, beginning with Gagne and continuing with Gall and Ward, continues in education. Contemporary educational theory believes that the human being is a multi-faceted being and that it is vital for autonomous philosophical and educational foundations laid years ago to synthesize in order to develop diverse learners holistically.

⁴⁹ Robert M. Gagne, *The Conditions of Learning* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), 20-21.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁵¹ Meredith D. Gall and Beatrice A. Ward, *Critical Issues in Educational Psychology*, 41.

The Bible as Literature

In this thesis-project, I seek to connect Biblical genres to the cognitive, affective, and synectic domains of the human being, through homiletics. To do this, I must be well aware of what Biblical genre is and how it works. The following section deals with literature in the field of the Bible as literature.

A Brief History of Literary Criticism

Discussion about the Bible as literature has antecedents in literary interpretation in the end of the nineteenth century. Beginning with source criticism, Julius Wellhausen sought to lay bare the documents an author used when writing. Out of source criticism, came form criticism. The father of form criticism is Hermann Gunkel, a German scholar in the late eighteen hundreds. As Sydney Greidanus observes, “Gunkel became the first to apply form criticism to the Old Testament, classifying prose narrative into such forms as myth, folktale, saga, romance, legend, and historical narrative.”⁵² He continues, “The task of form criticism is to identify the literary forms of the material, their structures, intentions, and settings, to understand the oral or pre-literary stage of their development.”⁵³ From form criticism came redaction criticism in the 1950s when Rudolph Bultmann’s disciples developed a method for investigating large units of writings and their authors. Redaction criticism regards the author of the text as editor of his source material. In 1968, James Muilenburg addressed the Society of Biblical Literature and faulted literary interpretation for its exclusive attention to forms and

⁵² Sydney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 53.

⁵³ Ibid.

neglect of biblical content.⁵⁴ This address led to rhetorical criticism interested in understanding the nature of Biblical literary composition. Since Muilenburg's address, literary interpretation has continued forward, fractured, and spun into numerous other schools of criticism.

Biblically Centered Literary Criticism

For the purpose of this thesis-project, I engage scholars in Biblical literature that were influenced by Muilenburg's presidential address in 1968 and attempt to interpret meaning in Biblical literature through methodology literarily informed and Biblically saturated. Northrop Frye in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* certainly belongs here. In introduction to his book, Frye writes:

There have always been two directions in Biblical scholarship, the critical and the traditional, though often they have merged. The critical approach establishes the text and studies the historical and cultural background; the traditional interprets it in accordance with what a consensus of theological and ecclesiastical authorities have declared the meaning to be. I could not find the clues I wanted in critical Biblical scholarship, so far as I was acquainted with it. The analytical and historical approach that has dominated Biblical criticism for over a century was of relatively little use to me, however incidentally I may depend on it. At no point does it throw any real light on how or why a poet might read the Bible.⁵⁵

With this intent, Frye set out to interpret and make meaning of literature in the Bible.

Frye states that the title to his book is intentional. He engages how literature in the Bible serves as a code. That is to say, he approaches the Bible as a unified structure of narrative and imagery that forms code-assisting interpretation and understanding in

⁵⁴ Jeffrey D. Arthurs, "Biblical Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism" (Ph.D. diss., Purdue University Press, 1992), 9.

⁵⁵ Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), xvii.

English literature. Frye believes understanding the literary aspects of the Bible is key to understanding literature in general. Frye's book is broken into two sections. In the first section, "The Order of Words" Frye distills Biblical poetry into categories of language, myth, metaphor, and typology. In the second section titled "The Order of Types," Frye distills Biblical narrative into revelation, imagery, narrative, and rhetoric. He says very little about rhetoric. However, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye wrote an essay titled "Rhetorical Criticism: Theory of Genres" where he distinguishes between ornamental speech and persuasive speech and lumps all of literature into one of three genres: drama, epic, and lyric.⁵⁶ Frye adopts a tentative postulate related to rhetoric, writing "that if the direct union of grammar and logic is characteristic of non-literary verbal structures, literature may be described as the rhetorical organization of grammar and logic."⁵⁷ This approach to rhetoric does little to describe the effect literature has on readers in which this thesis-project is interested.

Leland Ryken agrees with Frye about the importance of understanding poetry and narrative in Scripture to understand literature outside the Bible. He followed Frye's example by writing *The Literature of the Bible*. Ryken wrote *The Literature of the Bible* with two purposes. His first purpose is similar to Frye's. He approaches Scripture as code for understanding extra-Biblical literature.⁵⁸ His second purpose is different from Frye. Unlike Frye, he writes for understanding the Bible as literature.⁵⁹ In doing so, unlike

⁵⁶ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 246.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 245.

⁵⁸ Leland Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 9.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

Frye, he spends time touching on rhetorical impact. However, in this book, rhetorical impact is relegated to literary devices rather than Biblical genres. For example, when writing about the literary device “satire,” Ryken writes, “The satirist’s aim is positive (the reform of mankind), but his technique is mainly negative, since he is always busy attacking someone or something.”⁶⁰

Up to this point in history, both Frye and Ryken engage the Bible as literature to understand literature outside the Bible. This changed in 1984 when Ryken wrote *How to Read the Bible as Literature: and Get More Out of It*. In it, Ryken takes his and Frye’s work a step further studying the Bible solely as literature to understand the Bible better. This is a change from previous intent in the study of the Bible as literature. Frye’s work and Ryken’s earlier work primarily influence study of literature outside the Bible, but Ryken’s new work primarily influences study of Biblical literature. In this Ryken spends more time addressing the Bible as literature than Frye does and he touches on rhetorical impact. For example, when describing narrative, he writes, “Whenever a biblical storyteller goes beyond the documentary impulse to record what happened and proceeds to describe how it happened, he thereby signals that he wishes us, the readers, to share an experience, perhaps a prolonged experience, with one or more characters.”⁶¹ Regarding poetry he writes, “Readers of poetry need to think in images, just as poets do. Poetry is affective in nature, and it affects us partly through its sensory vividness.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., 261.

⁶¹ Ibid., 34.

⁶² Ibid., 90.

Three years after the publishing of Ryken's *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode edited *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. This work was groundbreaking in size and intent. Like Ryken, Alter and Kermode desire to understand the literature in the Bible. They believe that literary study of the Biblical text is vital to understanding the Bible:

If we were asked to state more positively why we have approached the subject as we have done, we should reply as follows. First of all, the Bible, considered as a book, achieves its effects by means no different from those generally employed by written language. This is true whatever our reasons for attributing value to it – as the report of God's action in history, as the founding text of a religion or religions, as a guide to ethics, as evidence about people and societies in the remote past, and so on. Indeed literary analysis must come first, for unless we have a sound understanding of what the text is doing and saying, it will not be of much value in other respects. It has been said that the best reason for the serious study of the Bible – for learning how to read it well – is written across history of Western culture: see what happens when people misread it, read it badly, or read it on false assumptions.⁶³

Ryken echoes this intent in his preface:

Traditionally, we have been so preoccupied with the hermeneutical question of how to *interpret* what the Bible says that we have been left impoverished in techniques to *describe* and interact with the text itself.⁶⁴

Alter, Kermode, and Ryken all edit/write with intent to interpret and understand Scripture as literature.

While noting this similarity, there is also a major difference between these two books. Alter and Kermode's methodology deals with one book in the Bible at a time, covering each book in the Bible. Ryken's methodology deals with Biblical genres. This is

⁶³ Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, ed., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1987), 3.

⁶⁴ Leland Ryken, *How To Read the Bible as Literature: and Get More Out of It* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 9.

not the case overall, as Alter later wrote an entire book describing Biblical narrative in *The Art of Narrative*. However, the methodology in these books makes them different. Like Frye, both address literary devices and functions, but Alter/Kermode do so by focusing on Biblical books, and Ryken does so by focusing on genres. Rhetoric in Alter's and Kermode's book is similar to Ryken's earlier book, *The Literature of the Bible*. Rhetorical impact is relegated to literary devices rather than persuasive effects.

John Gable, Charles Wheeler, and Anthony York joined the Bible as literature discussion by writing *The Bible as Literature* in 1986.⁶⁵ This book is similar in intent to Alter, Kermode, and Ryken. In it, they touch on the entire Bible as literature (similar to Alter and Kermode) but do so, genre by genre – like Ryken. This book is less detailed than Alter and Kermode's book and similar in detail to Ryken's *How To Read the Bible as Literature*, but covers more Biblical genres. Addressing more genres does not allow Gable, Wheeler, and York to say more about any one genre than Alter, Kermode, and Ryken do. In fact, they say less than these other books about rhetorical impact.

In 1987 Ryken wrote *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. Ryken considers this work a complete revision of material in *The Bible as Literature* regarding literary approach.⁶⁶ In *The Bible as Literature*, Ryken's approach uses the Bible as code for extra-Biblical literature. In *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* he approaches the Bible as literature to understand Biblical literature better. In

⁶⁵ John B. Gable, Charles B. Wheeler, Anthony D. York, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶⁶ Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 9.

doing so, Ryken says more about rhetorical impact in this book than any of his previous books. For example, in writing about proverbs:

Proverbs ordinarily lose a lot of their impact when they appear in a collection. They are most effective when we can take them to a situation in life. But of course we would not have them at our disposal if we did not have literary collections of them.⁶⁷

More than this, Ryken goes further than just describing rhetorical impact and offers advice about teaching or studying narrative, poetry, and miscellaneous genres like proverbs. He writes, “The best way to teach or study biblical proverbs is to supply a context for each one from someone’s actual experience or from observations of what is going on in society and the world.”⁶⁸ Ryken is the first out of the books dealt with in this section to connect rhetorical impact to teaching methodology. His approach highlights the beginning of a trend in the Bible as literature academic field. The trend, beginning in the eighties and continuing into the present, is to interpret and understand individual Biblical genres:

Most of the more recent literary studies of the Bible have not attempted Frye’s encyclopedic approach, but have criticized genres, books, or portions of books of the Bible. A favorite genre of these critics is narrative, corresponding to the widespread interest in narrative among folklorists, sociologists, philosophers, and theologians.⁶⁹

In focusing upon individual genres, scholars are beginning to say more about each.

As the above literature review indicates, little scholarly work focused upon the Bible as literature one hundred years ago. That changed with Muilenburg’s address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968. Northrop Frye, Leland Ryken, Robert Alter, and

⁶⁷ Ibid., 316.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Arthurs, “Biblical Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism,” 6.

Frank Kermode are a few of the prominent scholars who pioneered works on the Bible as literature. Today, others are building on the foundation they have laid. The next section will demonstrate that homiletics have taken notice of these advances. Rhetorical impact in Biblical genres now influences preaching methodology.

Homiletics

The previous two sections have little correlation with one another. This section is different. The academic field of homiletics has listened to the academic fields of educational learning theory and Biblical literature to communicate Scripture in relevant and Biblically accurate ways. This section of the literature review looks at homiletical literature grounded in the theory of the previous two sections: educational learning theory and the Bible as literature. To accomplish this, this section is broken into two parts. The first part deals with homiletical literature grounded in educational learning theory. The second part deals with homiletical literature grounded in the Bible as literature.

Educational Learning Theory and Homiletics

Educational learning theory supports a great deal of homiletics. However, to find proof of such support is not easy. Sometimes educational learning theory's impact is implicit. It is there, but not directly. Other times, educational learning theory's impact is a little more direct. It appears briefly in the preface or introduction of a book, or in a paper or an article for a homiletical society.

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society published an article by Victor D. Anderson titled “Improving Spiritual Formation in Expository Preaching by Using

Cognitive Moral Development Theory.” In it, Anderson proposes Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of Cognitive Moral Development (CMD) as a methodology for effective expository preaching.⁷⁰ He attempts to persuade preachers to adopt three tenets from CMD: (1) The isolation of reasoning from behavior and content; (2) the existence of qualitatively different stages of moral development; and (3) the idea that moral reasoning develops through life.⁷¹ He states three positive outcomes by appropriating Kohlberg’s CMD into preaching. First, it clarifies transformation as the goal of expository preaching. Second, it improves audience analysis. Third, it creates sermons that induce transitions to higher stages of moral reasoning.⁷² The results of CMD are synectic in orientation, but they are cognitively developed. Thus, the primary focus in this article is cognitive development and awareness through preaching. As an advocate of idealism in education, Butler would agree with the use of CMD in preaching. In fact, Butler would most likely encourage any kind of cognitive stimulation whether it be Kohlberg’s CMD, Harris’ cognitive personalization of ideas, or Bloom’s Taxonomy.

In the same issue of *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletical Society*, Jeffrey D. Arthurs wrote a contrasting article to Anderson’s. In it, he encourages the preacher not to abandon affect, otherwise known as “pathos,” when preaching. To be fair, Arthurs’ article is not a rebuttal of Anderson’s article but rather a general exhortation for preachers. Arthurs writes, “Preaching that addresses the emotions along with the mind is more effective than preaching which speaks only to the mind. This truth seems self-

⁷⁰ Victor D. Anderson, “Improving Spiritual Formation In Expository Preaching By using Cognitive Moral Development Theory,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletical Society* 1, no. 1 (December 2001): 33.

⁷¹ Ibid., 37.

⁷² Ibid., 33.

evident, yet pathos receives little attention in homiletics today.”⁷³ Van Cleve Morris and every other existentialist educators would quickly approve of Arthurs’ article. Morris would agree that cognitive development without affect accomplishes nothing of value. Of course, Anderson and other idealists would say that cognitive development rightly applied touches affect.

Gagne would say that cognitive and affective development are different sides to the same coin. He would point out that contemporary educational theory recognizes the importance of both cognitive and affective development. He would encourage the use of both. This is what John V. Tornfelt argued in his paper, “Preaching and Learning Styles: How to Communicate so People can Listen.” Tornfelt writes this about preaching: “One neglected factor has been learning styles which accounts for why people relate well to some sermons and struggle with other ones.”⁷⁴ Alongside cognitive and affective development, Tornfelt highlights the need for multiple domain development, including synectic.⁷⁵ Pragmatists like Dewey would wholeheartedly agree with the inclusion of synectic development in learning. In combining diverse learning domains, Tornfelt is in line with many contemporary educational theorists.

Similar to Tornfelt, J. Kent Edwards in *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching* cites Howard Gardner’s list of eight intelligences as warrant to preach in first person.⁷⁶

⁷³ Jeffrey D. Arthurs, “The Place of Pathos in Preaching,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletical Society* 1, no. 1 (December 2001): 15.

⁷⁴ John V. Tornfelt, “Preaching and Learning Styles: How to Communicate so People Can Listen,” (Paper presented at Evangelical Homiletical Society, Vancouver, B.C. 2003), 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁶ J. Kent Edwards, *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 15-18.

While first person narrative is a narrow and limited solution to Gardner's "multiple intelligences," it does highlight the collective agreement in contemporary homiletical theory today. In the *Journal for Preachers*, Leonora Tubbs Tisdale wrote, "While the field of preaching has not much attended to the relationship between forms and knowing modes, contextual theologians on the global scene have begun exploring such linkages."⁷⁷ She summarizes four forms local theologies have taken through history: theology as variation on sacred text, theology as wisdom, theology as sure knowledge, and theology as praxis. She argues the relevance of each form for diverse learners. This is another attempt (like Tornfelt and Edwards) to incorporate educational learning theory into homiletics. Tornfelt, Edwards, and Tisdale use different learning theories to say and do the same thing: influence preachers to preach with sensitivity to diverse learners.

Human beings are multi-faceted learners. Therefore, human beings need to be engaged in their multi-faceted domains. According to these articles, papers, and books, preachers need to take note of this and engage the whole learner through preaching.

The Bible as Literature and Homiletics

Whereas educational learning theory's impact on homiletics is difficult to cite, the impact of Biblical literature upon homiletics is not. It is everywhere. In fact, it seems like every homiletic book published today mentions Biblical genre in one way or another. For this literature review, I highlight four books that directly relate the Bible as literature to preaching.

⁷⁷ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, "Ways of Knowing and Forms for Preaching," *Journal for Preachers* 19, no. 4 (April 1996): 30.

In 1988, Sidney Greidanus wrote *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. The back cover of the book quotes Gordon D. Fee: “For the first time we have a significant book on homiletics that helps the preacher/teacher grapple with the differences in the various biblical genres.” In this book, Greidanus, like Ryken, breaks Scripture into genres and analyzes how they work. However, Greidanus would probably say that Ryken is weak in his criticism. Ryken uses a literary criticism approach and Greidanus uses a literary-historical-theological criticism approach. Ryken stops at analyzing how Biblical genres work and Greidanus suggests guidelines for preaching each genre he analyzes. With this being said, Ryken takes rhetorical impact further in *Words of Delight* than Greidanus does in his book. Ryken suggests some implications for the teacher to teach Biblical genres with sensitivity to rhetorical impact whereas Greidanus relegates rhetoric to form.

In 1989, Thomas Long wrote *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*, a more concise and user-friendly guide than Greidanus’. Long addresses five Biblical genres: Psalms, Proverbs, narrative, parables, and epistles. Though there is some overlap between Greidanus and Long in genres chosen, their methodologies vary drastically. Greidanus is exhaustive and historical. Long is laconic and literary. Greidanus leans toward the theoretical and Long leans toward the practical. Greidanus’ methodology notes literary characteristics and guidelines for preaching each genre. Long’s methodology discerns each genre’s rhetorical impact by asking this question: “How may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting?”⁷⁸ By asking this question, Long applies a similar approach to understanding the Bible as

⁷⁸ Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 33.

literature as Ryken does in *Words of Delight* and directly relates the rhetorical impact of Biblical genres to preaching. Long's approach establishes a clear methodology for preaching that is sensitive to what Biblical genres do.

Some authors on homiletics have followed Greidanus' and Long's path. In 1992, Michael Duduit edited the *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, which contains articles on various genres and offers implications for preaching.⁷⁹ The only genre the *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* addresses that Greidanus and Long do not is "apocalyptic."⁸⁰ There is little disagreement and much agreement between what Greidanus and Long say in their books and what the scholars in the *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* say in their chapters. In fact, Greidanus and Long comprise two of the ten authors in part IV of this book. Because numerous authors comprise part IV, what is said about rhetorical impact depends upon each author's perspective. Greidanus says nothing about Biblical genre's rhetorical impact upon preaching, while Long and Achtemeier say the most. The other authors fall somewhere in between Greidanus and Long/Achtemeier.

One of the most recent works in this area is *Preaching with Variety* by Jeffrey Arthurs. In it, Arthurs addresses narrative, parables, proverbs, epistles, and apocalyptic literature. While it is similar to Greidanus and Long in describing how each genre works, it is different. Standing on the foundation laid by scholars such as Frye, Ryken, Alter, and Kermode, Arthurs writes:

The Bible is a cornucopia of literary forms – poetry, law, parable, and story, to name a few. Because God has 'taken the trouble' of

⁷⁹ Michael Duduit, ed., *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 378-392.

communicating with such variety, careful exegetes should sit up and take notice. We rejoice in, respond to, and learn from our Lord's creativity.⁸¹

This work is most like Long's because it encourages creative preaching based upon the rhetorical impact of Biblical genres. The greatest difference between Long and Arthurs is that rhetorical impact is a small part of Long's book, while rhetorical impact drives Arthurs' book. In this way Arthurs' book serves as a model for this thesis-project.

The Bible as literature inspires the preacher to think in terms of accuracy and relevance. It helps the preacher to see what the text is saying and doing. By understanding what the text is saying and doing, the Biblical text shapes sermon form and impact.

Conclusion

The above literature review attempts to look at the major literary works in the fields of educational learning theory, the Bible as literature, and homiletics grounded in educational learning theory and the Bible as literature. I will apply the insights gained from this literature review to my project.

⁸¹ Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching With Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 22.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, established its theological and educational framework, and discussed key authors and literature in the literature review, I will now explain my project design. As stated in Chapter 1, my thesis is: Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically. Accordingly, the project design involves seven components: first, interviewing an educational specialist to get feed-forward. Second, a survey of Pearl Church to understand the diversity of learners that exist within the church. Third, categorizing the different learners into three groupings that correlate with educational schools of learning to better understand how people in Pearl Church learn. Fourth, selecting and interviewing one learner from each educational school of learning so that I understand more about how they learn. Fifth, preaching three sermons. Each sermon is sensitive to the learning domain that the genre engages and intentionally touches a different kind of learner. Sixth, at the conclusion of the sermon-series I meet with one learner from each of the learning domains in the educational triangle to evaluate their learning experience. Seventh, gathering all information and findings from the first six parts into a summary of outcomes detailed in Chapter 5 of this thesis-project.

Interviewing an Educational Specialist

Before setting-out on a project dealing with educational learning theory and learning styles, I met with an educational specialist to gain feed-forward on my hypothesis, presumptions, and general direction. To do this, I met with Andy Sears. Andy holds an M.A. in education, has been an educator for the last fifteen years, and currently serves as principal for a private Christian high school known for excellence in academics. Though the interview went in numerous directions, seven questions guided our conversation: How important is the students' educational learning style to the way they learn? Is it important for teachers and students to familiarize themselves with their learning style? How important is it for students to grow in their ability to learn from different teaching styles? How could educational learning theory benefit ministries in church? How could educational learning theory benefit preaching? How would you suggest I test my church to find out how they learn? Based on our conversation, are there any important issues you believe I am missing or need to consider? This interview is in Appendix 4 and I discuss the results of this interview in the next chapter.

Pearl Church Survey

Based upon my interview with Andy, resources for surveying gleaned from Dr. Kang, and my understanding of educational learning styles through my undergraduate studies in Educational Ministries, I comprised a survey. The survey process included three steps.

Establishing Purpose

The first step of the survey process established a purpose. The purpose of the survey was to find out what kinds of learners exist in Pearl Church.

Creating the Survey

The second step of the survey process established a survey. Five schools of learning summarize the different approaches education has taken over the years: idealism, existentialism, pragmatism, realism, and neo-scholasticism. Three schools of learning (idealism, existentialism, and pragmatism) relate directly to the three domains in the educational triangle. Two schools of learning (realism and neo-scholasticism) fall directly between two different domains in the educational triangle. To understand what kinds of learners exist in Pearl Church, I asked five questions covering a broad range of life: (1) Which of the following would you choose to read? (2) Which of the following would you choose to watch on television? (3) Which book in Scripture would you most enjoy reading? (4) If you had to take a class, what class would you choose? By which method do you learn best? (5) The format for the survey was multiple-choice. For each question, five possible answers existed. Each possible answer correlated to one of five schools of learning. The survey form is in Appendix 2. I discuss the results in the next chapter.

Taking the Survey

In the third step of the survey process, I distributed the survey. To attain results reflective of Pearl Church, as many people as possible needed to take the survey. For this

reason, I distributed the survey at the conclusion of our two Sunday morning worship services. I chose the end of the services to do this because numerous congregants arrive late to church. Just after the benediction, I explained to the congregation that I needed them to help me with my D. Min. project by taking five minutes to fill out a survey I had placed under their chair. I asked them to leave the survey on top of their chair once completed for me to collect.

Categorizing Learners in Pearl Church

After collecting the surveys, I tallied the results. As mentioned previously, each possible answer correlated with one of five schools of learning. The “A” answers correlated with the school of pragmatism. The “B” answers correlated with the school of realism. The “C” answers correlated with the school of neo-scholasticism. The “D” answers correlated with the school of idealism. The “E” answers correlated with the school of existentialism.

I used the following schema to evaluate the survey results. I tallied each survey that had “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E” checked more than three times under the appropriate school of learning. I tallied each survey that had “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E” checked twice and the other questions had “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E” checked no more than once under the appropriate school of learning. I tallied each survey that had “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E” checked two times for two different schools of learning as “split.” I tallied each survey that had “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E” checked one time each as “undecided.” I tallied each survey having two checked answers for one question or not fully filled out as

“incorrect.” The results from this survey are in Appendix 2. I discuss the results in the next chapter.

Selecting and Interviewing Learners

To understand learners from each school of learning, I used results from the survey to identify the highest-ranking learner from each school of learning and I interviewed them. All five interviewees had checked three or more of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “E.” Each interview lasted approximately twenty minutes and consisted of the same six questions: (1) Can you describe to me how you learn best? (2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning? (3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from? (4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from? (5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture? (6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church’s congregation? The results from this survey are in Appendix 3. I discuss the results in the next chapter.

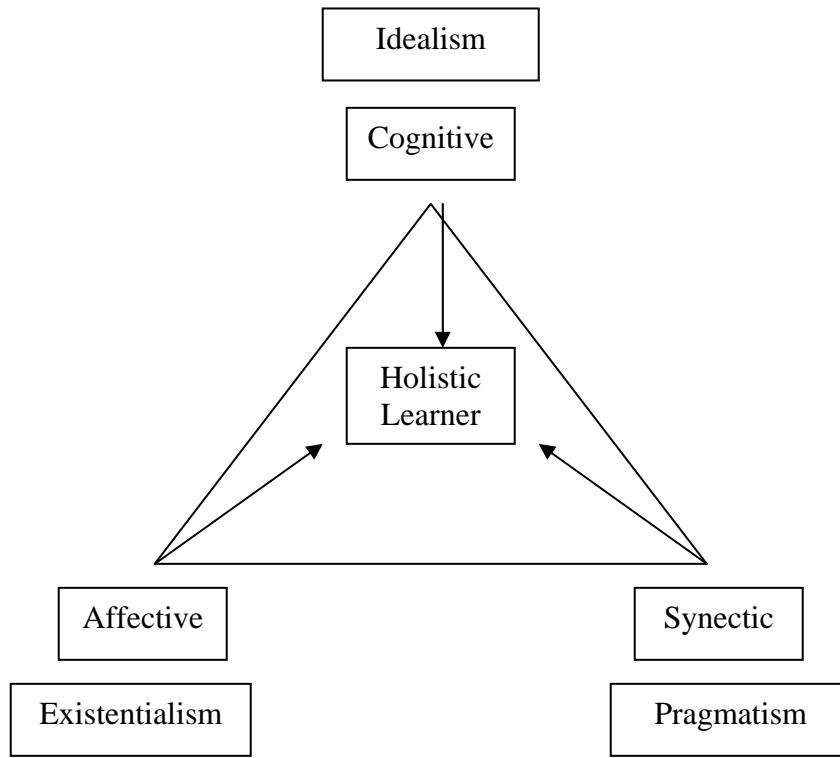
Preaching Three Sermons

Based on the problem and setting in Chapter 1, the theological and educational framework in Chapter 2, the literature review in Chapter 3, my interview with an educational specialist, the Pearl Church survey results and my interview with different learners from five schools of learning, I wrote and preached three sermons. Each sermon had the thesis of this paper in mind: I propose that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically.

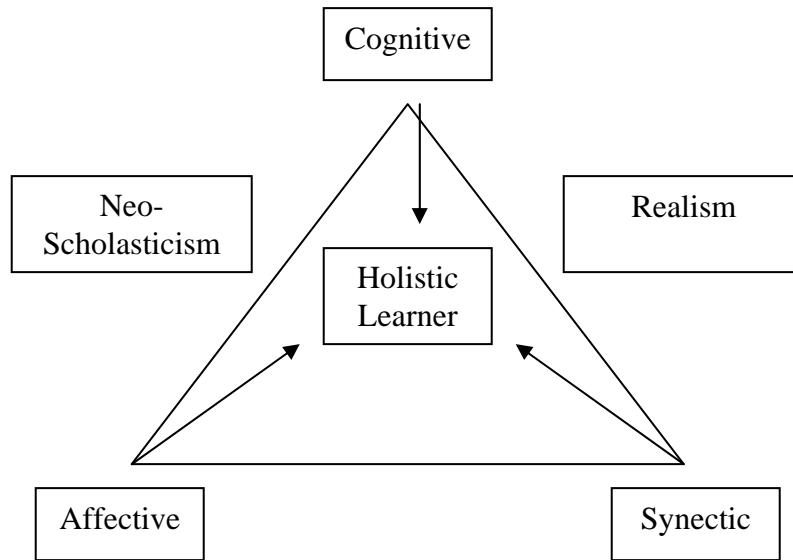
The three sermons I preached were in a sermon series from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. This section of Matthew contains the Biblical genre "speech." In Jesus' speech, different sections connect to different parts of the educational triangle. For example, Matthew 5:27-37 is cognitive oriented. In it, Jesus primary purpose is to explain fidelity. Matthew 7:13-27 is synectic oriented. In it, Jesus primary purpose is to apply the words of his sermon to the lives of his listeners. Matthew 7:28-29 is affective oriented. In it, Matthew concludes his recording of Jesus sermon in his own words by speaking to the affective impact Jesus' sermon had. I preached these sermons as best I could with sensitivity to cognitive, affective, and synectic impact in the Biblical text and to the diverse learners in my church. These sermons are in Appendix 5.

Interviewing Cognitive, Affective, and Synectic Learners

To gauge the impact my sermons had, I interviewed three different learners at different times following the sermon-series. I identified the learners I needed to interview through the Pearl Church survey. I mentioned earlier in this chapter that five schools of learning summarize the different approaches education has taken over the years. Three out of the five schools of learning (idealism, existentialism, and pragmatism) relate directly to the three domains in the educational triangle:



Two out of the five schools of learning (realism and neo-scholasticism) fall directly between two different domains in the educational triangle:



For the purposes of this thesis-project, I interviewed the highest-ranking idealist, existentialist, and pragmatist based on the survey because together, they reflect the educational triangle. Each graciously agreed to meet with me to discuss my sermons.

Each interview followed the same format and addressed the same questions. We discussed one sermon at a time. Discussion about each sermon began with a brief summary of the sermon and continued with six questions: (1) what did you appreciate about this sermon? (2) What didn't you appreciate? (3) What was helpful? (4) What was unhelpful? (5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon? (6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon? After discussing all three sermons, I asked the interviewee to rate the sermons from their favorite, to their least favorite in relation to overall impact. The results from these interviews are in Appendix 6. I discuss the results in the next chapter.

Gathering All Information and Findings

This chapter details six of the seven components in my project. The seventh and final component to this project involves gathering all information and findings from the first six parts into a summary of outcomes found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, established its theological and educational framework, discussed key authors and literature in the literature review, and explained the project design, I will now discuss outcomes from this thesis-project. Three sections guide the evaluation of this thesis-project: (1) What I learned. (2) How these outcomes will affect my ministry. (3) Things left undone.

What I Learned

To describe what I have learned, this section is broken into three sections. The first section describes things I have learned from Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (the more theoretical/bookish aspects of this thesis-project). The second section describes things I have learned from the project described in Chapter 4 and executed in Pearl Church. The third section details three major lessons I have learned from the thesis-project.

Things Learned from Chapters 1, 2, and 3

I have learned a great deal from each chapter in this thesis-project. Chapter 1 forced me to learn about the context I minister in and the people I minister to. When I planted Pearl Church in August 2001, I spent a lot of time researching the Pearl District and people who live there. Since those formative years, I have not pursued further research. I have ministered for six years under the assumption that people in my church are *the* people my research said they would be. The statistical survey clarified these

assumptions.⁸² It affirmed some of my assumptions. I thought the average age of people in Pearl Church was thirty-three years old, and it is. However the statistical survey denied some of my assumptions. I thought the gender ratio was about fifty percent men and fifty percent women, and it is not. The statistical survey revealed twenty percent more women than men in Pearl Church. More than clarifying assumptions, Chapter 1 clarified a problem I intuitively recognized but had yet to define. What was the problem? Each person learns a little bit differently than other persons and thus values a different kind of sermonic experience. After clarifying this problem, I became motivated to work toward a solution. This thesis-project is the result of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 taught me that supporting my assumptions both theologically and educationally is more difficult than I assumed. Wrestling with theology and educational theory is a lot of work. I have grown in appreciation and respect for those who make their professions by this type of labor. Chapter 2 has also taught me that supporting ministry both theologically and educationally is work worth doing. Theology establishes a God-centered framework. Educational learning theory establishes a learning framework. Together they serve as a solid foundation for church ministry.

Chapter 3 synthesized literature from educational learning theory, literary criticism, and homiletics that had been mounting in my mind for some time. It oriented me to a chronological understanding of each field and allowed me to see their growth spurts from past to present. I have learned how philosophy undergirds educational learning theory. I have learned how literary criticism undergirds the study of the Bible as literature. I have learned how homiletics have integrated these two fields. The depth and breadth of understanding I gained from this chapter has been incredible.

⁸² See Appendix 1: Statistical Survey of Pearl Church.

Not only did I learn a great deal from Chapters 1 through 3 in this thesis-project, but I have learned a great deal from these chapters as a cohesive unit. Identifying my ministry context, clearly stating the problem and thesis, framing the thesis theologically and educationally, and grappling with literature surrounding the thesis is a wise approach to any problem in ministry. This is not to say that I will give as much time and effort to every problem in my church as I have to Chapters 1 through 3. However, these chapters provide a framework I plan to employ in my ministry from this point forward.

Things Learned from the Project

While I learned a lot from writing Chapters 1 through 3, I also learned a lot from executing the project described in Chapter 4. As stated in the last chapter, seven components comprise the project I executed in Pearl Church: First, I interviewed an educational specialist to get feed-forward. Second, I surveyed Pearl Church to understand the diversity of learners that exist within the church. Third, I categorized the different learners into three groupings that correlate with educational schools of learning to better understand how people in Pearl Church learn. Fourth, I selected and interviewed one learner from each educational school of learning so that I understand more about how they learn. Fifth, I preached three sermons. Each sermon was sensitive to the learning domain that the text's genre engages and intentionally touched a different kind of learner. Sixth, at the conclusion of the sermon-series, I met with one learner from each of the learning domains in the educational triangle. I interviewed and evaluated their learning experience. Seventh, I gathered all information and findings from the first six parts into a summary of outcomes. I detail outcomes below.

Interview with Andy Sears

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I met with Andy Sears to gain feed-forward on my hypothesis, presumptions, and general direction. This interview appears in its entirety in Appendix 4. In this interview, I asked Andy seven questions: First, how important are student's educational learning styles to the way they learn? Second, is it important for teachers and students to familiarize themselves with their own learning styles? Third, how important is it for students to grow in their ability to learn from different teaching styles? Fourth, how could educational learning theory benefit church ministries? Fifth, how could educational learning theory benefit preaching? Sixth, how would you suggest I test my church to find out how they learn? Seventh, based on our conversation, are there any important issues you believe I am missing or need to consider?

To the first question, Andy answered "critically important!" He lamented the fact that educators and students alike do not recognize their own learning styles. According to Andy, this naivety results in teachers teaching through their own learning style and only students similar in learning style learning. Those who learn differently become frustrated and eventually apathetic toward education in general.

To the second question, Andy answered "yes!" He went on to say, "Without familiarization to learning styles, teachers and students alike struggle. Teachers end up teaching out of their preferred learning style without consideration to the student or to the content of their subject. Students end up thinking the teacher is boring and irrelevant."

To the third question, Andy answered “very”: “Without this understanding and ability, learners become unbalanced. If they can only learn one way and their learning style associates with one area of learning then unbalance is the sure result.”

To the fourth question, Andy suggested that educational learning theory related to experience would be extremely helpful. He talked about post-modernity and the need to connect truth to action. In contrast to many educators that believe pragmatism is the best method to use for education, Andy believes experience provides only a partial education. He strives for holistic education.

To the fifth question, Andy cited Bloom’s Taxonomy. According to Bloom’s Taxonomy, cognitive development includes six levels: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Andy talked about sermons needing to go cognitively deeper. In most cases, he believes sermons go no further than the third level of cognitive development. He believes that cognitive development touching the fourth, fifth, or sixth level in Bloom’s Taxonomy would lead to changed behavior more often.

To the sixth question Andy cited web based tools like DISC, Myer and Briggs, Uniquely You, etc.

To the seventh question, Andy suggested that my church is filled with diverse learners. He encouraged me to train my staff as well as my congregation in the issues of learning styles. He said the result would be greater appreciation for teachings suited for other kinds of learning styles.

My interview with Andy to gain feed-forward was very affirming. I came away feeling that I was onto something. It affirmed that the issue of learning styles is important

to learning. It also affirmed that educators and pastors do not consider these issues as often or as deeply as they ought.

Surveying Pearl Church

Based upon my interview with Andy, resources for surveying gleaned from Dr. Kang, and my understanding of educational learning styles through my undergraduate studies in Educational Ministries, I comprised a survey. The survey I created is in Appendix 2. One hundred and eighteen people took the survey.

Categorizing Learners in Pearl Church

I categorized learners in Pearl Church into one of five schools of learning: idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and neo-scholasticism. In general terms, these five schools of learning are defined as: (1) Idealism - wisdom being lectured or passed down. (2) Realism - science and known laws proven as true. (3) Pragmatism - experience, putting truths to life. (4) Existentialism – individual feeling, personal growth. (5) Neo-scholasticism – reasoning and comparing all areas.

The results of the survey reveal eighteen idealists, twelve realists, forty-nine pragmatists, fourteen existentialists, sixteen neo-scholastics, two split, two undecided, and five incorrect entries. I graph these results in Appendix 2.

The results from this survey disclose two things. First, because learners exist in each of the five schools of learning, it shows that diverse learners call Pearl Church home. Second, the prodigious ratio of pragmatism compared to the other schools of learning may reveal the influence post-modernity has upon Pearl Church congregants.

Knowledge absent of action has very little meaning to these people. Many have grown-up in a transitional time. They have observed modernity at its end and post-modernity at its beginning. They would describe modernity as heavy on truth but light on action. As post-moderns, they desire continuity between what they believe and how they live. In my opinion, this explains the high ratio of pragmatists in Pearl Church.

Interviewing Learners in Pearl Church

To understand learners from each school of learning, I used results from the survey to identify the highest-ranking learner from each school of learning, and I interviewed them. Simply identifying the highest-ranking learner from each school affirmed the validity of my survey. Idealists learn best through wisdom being lectured or passed down. The highest-ranking idealist holds an M.A. in Russian history and has ambition to teach history. Realists learn best through science and known laws that are proven true. The highest-ranking realist is a lawyer. Pragmatists learn best through experience and putting truths to life. The highest-ranking pragmatist minored in health in college, counts calories, schedules everything, and enjoys details. Existentialists learn best through individual feeling and personal growth. The highest-ranking existentialist majored in English literature in college and taught English literature to high school students. He loves to watch film and read poetry. Neo-scholastics learn best through reasoning and comparing all areas. The highest-ranking neo-scholastic is nearing the end of Ph. D. work in mathematics.

I asked each interviewee the same six questions: (1) Can you describe to me how you learn best? (2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning? (3) What

school of learning do pastors tend to preach from? (4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from? (5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture? (6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

While the results from these interviews are in Appendix 3, let me state five observations common to each. First, learners were able to define their school of learning in their own words. Second, each learner affirmed that it is difficult to learn from other schools of learning. Third, each learner believed that one of two things dictate sermon form. Either it is dictated by the preacher's comfort level with the sermon form known as "three points and a story," or it is dictated by the preacher's own learning style. Fourth, each learner observed no noticeable shift in sermon form no matter what Biblical genre the preacher preaches. Fifth, each learner thought that preachers do not consider the diversity of learning styles in the pew each Sunday.

These five observations teach me three lessons relevant to this thesis-project. First, they teach me that learners prefer their own style of learning instead of other styles. Second, they teach me that learners have a difficult time learning from other styles. Third, they teach me that learners and pastors tend to be stuck in their own learning styles.

Preaching Three Sermons

I preached three sermons from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7. In Jesus' speech, different sections connect to different parts of the educational triangle. For example, Matthew 5:27-37 is cognitive oriented. In it, Jesus' primary

purpose is to explain fidelity. Matthew 7:13-27 is synectic oriented. In it, Jesus' primary purpose is to apply the words of his sermon to the lives of his listeners. Matthew 7:28-29 is affectively oriented. In it, Matthew concludes his recording of Jesus sermon in his own words by speaking to the affective impact Jesus' sermon had. I preached these sermons as best I could to sensitively highlight the cognitive, synectic, and affective qualities in each text. These sermons are in Appendix 5.

Post-Sermon Interviews

To test the impact these three sermons had on different learners, I interviewed the highest-ranking idealist, existentialist, and pragmatist based on the survey. I chose to interview just the idealist, existentialist, and pragmatist for two reasons. First, these three learners reflect the extreme learning domains on the educational triangle. Second, because they reflect the extreme learning domains on the educational triangle, they most clearly prove or disprove my thesis. The results from these interviews were insightful.

The Matthew 5:27-37 sermon is primarily cognitive. In it, Jesus explains fidelity. The idealist loved this sermon. She said, "I loved this sermon. It was Biblical, insightful, and personally fruitful."⁸³ The existentialist did not love this sermon but thought it was okay. He said, "I was able to connect with the imagery on an emotional level and this was good for me."⁸⁴ The pragmatist did not like this sermon. She said, "Honestly, there was

⁸³ See Appendix 6, p 111.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 118.

very little for me to appreciate about this sermon. I appreciated the clarity but it lacked application throughout. I found myself asking ‘so what’ the entire time.”⁸⁵

The Matthew 7:13-27 is primarily synectic. In it, Jesus calls his listeners to apply the words of his sermon to their lives. The idealist thought this sermon was okay. She said, “some parts of the sermon were very good. I liked the part where you contrasted the four images.”⁸⁶ The existentialist thought this sermon was okay too. He said, “I would consider this a middle of the road sermon for you. With that said, near the end of the sermon I was gripped with feeling. I actually got goose-bumps.”⁸⁷ The pragmatist thoroughly enjoyed this sermon throughout. She said, “It was relevant and applicable.”⁸⁸

The Matthew 7:28-29 is primarily affective. In it, Matthew concludes his recording of Jesus sermon in his own words by speaking to the affective impact Jesus’ sermon had on his listeners. The idealist actually said that she “hated” this sermon. She said, “it was a bunch of fluff and too ‘feeling’ to say anything of meaning.”⁸⁹ The existentialist thought this was the best sermon I had ever preached. He said, “I loved and appreciated every single part of it. There was not one thing I didn’t appreciate about this sermon. It was very stirring.”⁹⁰ The pragmatist thought this sermon was okay. She said, “you overstated the point and made it too ‘feely’ in nature.”⁹¹

⁸⁵ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 119.

⁹¹ Ibid., 117.

At the end of the interview, I asked each learner to rate the sermons from their favorite, to their least favorite in relation to overall impact. The idealist chose Matthew 5:27-37 (the idealistic sermon) as her favorite and Matthew 7:28-29 (the affective sermon) as her least favorite. The pragmatist chose Matthew 7:13-27 (the synectic sermons) as her favorite and Matthew 7:28-29 (the affective sermon) as her least favorite. The existentialist chose Matthew 7:28-29 (the affective sermon) as his favorite sermon and Matthew 5:27-37 (the idealist sermon) as his least favorite. These interviews are in Appendix 6.

Three Major Lessons I have Learned from the Thesis-Project

Chapter 1 set out asking this question: How can preaching engage and help diverse learners in my church to learn? To answer this question I stated this thesis: I propose that Biblical genres must be preached with sensitivity to rhetorical function to foster holistic learning in diverse learners cognitively, affectively, and synectically. To test this, I preached three sermons from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount with sensitivity to rhetorical function and interviewed three diverse learners. As a result, this thesis-project has taught me three valuable lessons.

One lesson this thesis-project has taught me is that my thesis is accurate but not in the way I intended it. I assumed that as the preacher, I controlled learning, but I was wrong. The receiver controls his or her learning to a greater extent than I realized. To be sure, as the preacher, I assist their learning by speaking through their personal learning styles but effective preaching seems to be more of a team sport than an individual sport. Based on my post-sermon interviews, the idealist learned idealistically from the idealistic

sermon, the pragmatist learned pragmatically from the pragmatic sermon, and the existentialist learned existentially from the existential sermon. Surprisingly, the result of their learning was holistic. The idealist used affective and synectic words to describe the learning that occurred during the idealistic sermon. The pragmatist used idealistic and affective words to describe the learning that occurred during the pragmatic sermon. The existentialist used idealistic and pragmatic words to describe the learning that occurred during the existential sermon. Thus, preaching with sensitivity to rhetorical function in Biblical genres helps me help diverse learners to learn holistically.

A second lesson this thesis-project has taught me is that learners will do whatever they can to glean truth through their own learning style. The idealist, pragmatist, and existentialist were able to give positive feedback related to minor portions of my sermons that touched on their own learning styles. For example, in my interview with the existentialist, he constantly pointed to parts in all three sermons that touched him existentially even though the overall purpose of two out of three sermons was not existential.

The third lesson this thesis-project has taught me is that preaching Biblical genres with sensitivity to rhetorical function fosters the inclusion of diverse learners in one community. Although the idealist, pragmatist, and existentialist were not satisfied with two out of three sermons, they were more than satisfied with one out of three sermons. This satisfaction promises to keep them returning to Pearl Church to worship. Idealists, pragmatists, and existentialists all call Pearl Church “home,” and they all grow together.

How These Outcomes will Affect my Ministry

The outcomes of this thesis-project will affect my ministry in two areas: my preaching ministry in Pearl Church, and the ministries in Pearl Church.

How These Outcomes will Affect my Personal Ministry

The outcomes mentioned in the previous section will affect my preaching. I will preach with a different understanding. Instead of believing that different learners are all learning when I preach, I will assume that one kind of learner is learning well, and other learners are struggling to learn. Thus I will intentionally extend points/truths/movements to touch different kinds of learners. For example, in a sermon that is idealistic in nature, I will include an illustration that is affective in nature. This will allow diverse learners to learn a little in their own way from every sermon.

How these Outcomes will Affect Ministries in Pearl Church

The outcomes of this thesis-project will not only affect my preaching, but they will also affect other ministries in Pearl Church in at least three ways. (1) I intend to meet with my ministry leaders to discuss the outcomes of this thesis-project. Together we will brainstorm how each ministry can benefit from my findings and adjust accordingly. (2) I intend to meet with the Liturgy Team to discuss how the outcomes from this thesis-project might change the way we go about organizing our services. Perhaps services could intentionally balance the sermons related to different kinds of learners. For example, if the sermon emphasizes affective learning, the liturgy could emphasize cognitive and synectic learning. In doing so, maybe the service could touch diverse

learners so that no one leaves feeling untouched. (3) I intend each person on the ministry team to be aware of his or her own learning preference. I want them to be aware of their tendency to lead out of their own learning style preference and promote learning diversity in their leadership.

Things Left Undone

This thesis-project covered a lot of ground. However, more ground needs covering. In this thesis-project, I demonstrate that Biblical narrative, poetry, and epistolary literature touch all three domains on the educational triangle. Many Biblical genres remain. I would like to see case studies similar to mine connect Biblical genres like proverbs, apocalyptic, and prophecy to the educational triangle. Perhaps this could lead to a manual that helps people to understand the impact that different Biblical genres have upon learners.

To take this work a step further, I would be interested in connecting the educational triangle to Robinson's three purposes: explain, prove, and apply.⁹² How can the educational learning theory described in this thesis-project assist preachers to associate sermonic purpose to Biblical genres and diverse learners? This effort might take my abstract work and make it more applicable by connecting it to a solid homiletic.

This thesis-project has made it clear to me that the church has adapted educational learning theory and integrated it for ministry. Gardner's multiple intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy, Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of Cognitive Moral Development, and the educational triangle all emphasize similar truths in different ways. This might be too

⁹² Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 106-113.

much to hope for, but a chart aligning different educational theory into categories would be very helpful. It would allow people to visualize the similarities and dissimilarities in different educational theory and help them choose a model best suited to serve their desired outcomes.

God has made each person unique, but to each he has ordained the ministry of preaching to bring faith. My hope is that this thesis-project will result in helping learners to learn holistically through preaching which is sensitive to rhetorical function in Biblical genres. More than this, I hope that this thesis-project will encourage diverse learners to grow holistically in community, each Sunday as I preach the entire council of God.

APPENDIX 1
STATISTICAL SURVEY OF PEARL CHURCH

A blank church survey form and the church survey results are included.



Statistical Survey

About You...

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Status: Married Single/Divorced

Years as a Christian: 0-1 2-5 5-10 10-20 20+

Education: High school Undergraduate Graduate Doctoral

How well do you know the Bible: Barely Fairly Well Very Well



Statistical Survey Results

Overall Results

63 Respondents
27 Males / 36 Females
28 Married / 37 Single
Average Age: 33.4
Median Age: 29
Average Years as Christian: 10-20
Average Education: College graduates
Average Knowledge of Bible: Fairly well

1st service breakdown

28 respondents
15 Females
13 Males
11 Married
17 Single
Average Age: 34
Median Age: 31
Average Years as Christian: 10-20
Average Education: College graduates
Average Knowledge of Bible: Fairly well

2nd Service breakdown

35 respondents
22 Females
13 Males
17 Married
18 Single
Average Age: 33
Median Age: 28
Average Years as Christian: 10-20
Average Education: College graduates
Average Knowledge of Bible: Fairly well

APPENDIX 2
EDUCATIONAL LEARNING STYLE SURVEY

A blank educational learning survey form and the educational learning survey results are included.



Name (first only) _____

For the five questions below, please circle the answer that best describes you. Please do not spend too much time on any one question. Choose whichever answer appeals to you first.

1) Which of the following would you choose to read?

- a) "How-to"
- b) National Geographic
- c) Case Studies
- d) Biography
- e) Poetry

2) Which of the following would you choose to watch on television?

- a) Documentary
- b) Scientific Exploration
- c) Debate
- d) Speech
- e) Romance

3) Which book in Scripture would you most enjoy reading?

- a) Proverbs
- b) Deuteronomy
- c) Romans
- d) Isaiah
- e) Psalms

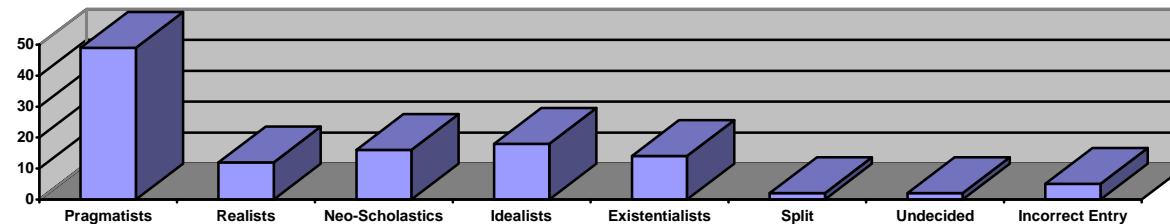
4) If you had to take a class, what class would you choose?

- a) Home Economics or Small Gas Engines or Woodshop
- b) Science
- c) Mathematics
- d) History
- e) Art

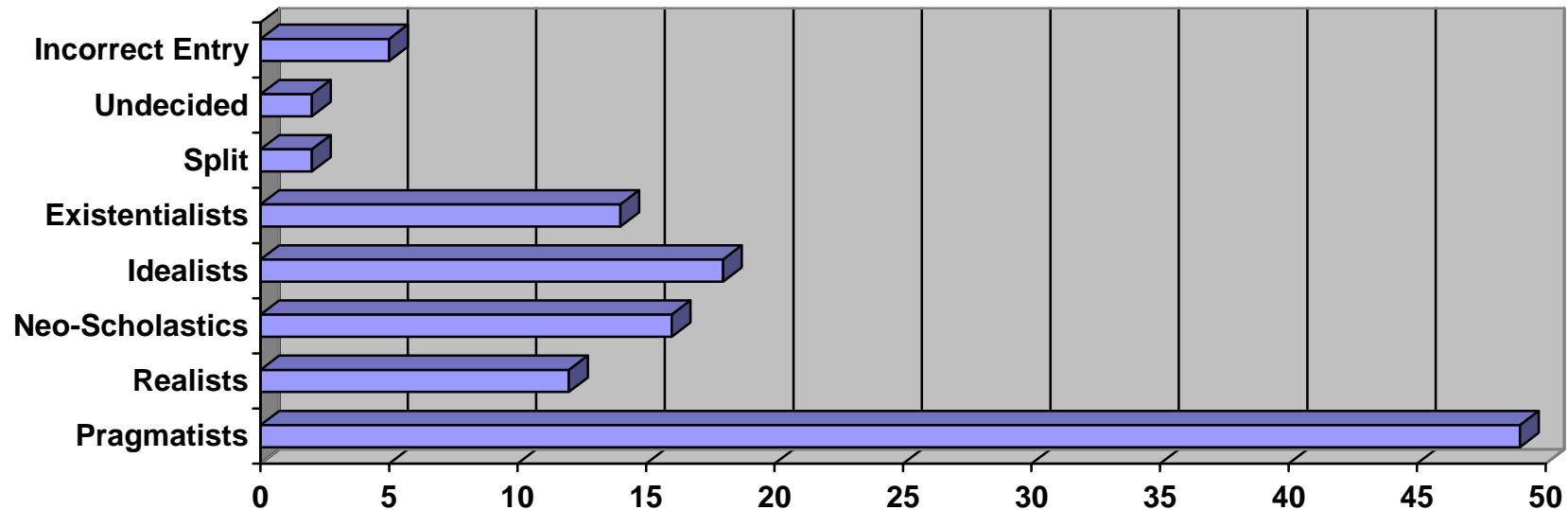
5) By which method do you learn best?

- a) Through experience, putting truths to life
- b) Through science and known laws that are proven as true
- c) Through reasoning and comparing all areas
- d) Through wisdom being lectured or passed down
- e) Through individual feeling, personal growth

Educational Learning Style Survey Results



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APPENDIX 3

EDUCATIONAL LEARNING STYLE INTERVIEWS

A blank educational learning style interview form and the educational learning style interview results are included.



Name (first only) _____
School of Learning:

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

- 1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?
- 2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?
- 3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?
- 4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?
- 5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?
- 6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within



Name (first only) Rachel
School of Learning: Idealism

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?

In a place where questions can be asked, where people are invested in the learning process. Being with people who have experience or wisdom in specialized areas. It is difficult for me to learn from someone who is not trained in the area they are teaching.

2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?

Yes, I get frustrated and discouraged but I do my best to listen and at least learn what not to do in case I am ever in their shoes.

3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?

Post-modern: Formless at times. Often pointless but fresh. Rarely do they have a main point. They often appeal to emotion.

Modern: Three points and a story, alliteration., formulaic, forced. They cram all passages into their personal form.

4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?

They preach from the New Testament all the time. I suppose this is because they do not know what to do with the rest of Scripture. Maybe it doesn't fit their sermon form. Maybe they are afraid.

5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?

Yes but it doesn't happen. Even in post-modernity the form never changes. It often feels the same no matter the genre. Delivery and the way points are made do not change either.

6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

Yes and I think pastors think about it. Are they thinking correctly about it? I don't know.



Name (first only) Monique
School of Learning: Realism

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?

Through observation first and kinesthetic second. To feel, see, and hear is important. For me experience is very important to the learning process.

2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?

I can learn concepts through lecture or books, but application is not as obvious through these methods. I always attempt to take what I am learning and apply it. Otherwise, learning that lacks ownership seems meaningless to me.

3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?

It varies from pastor to pastor. The default is certainly their own style. If they are not intentional about adjusting then the answer to your question is their own.

4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?

Almost always from the New Testament. In the New Testament they seem to preach from the epistles.

5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?

Yes. With that said, I do like a recognizable form. It assists me in learning. Rather than discerning how they are saying what they are saying I can just hear what they are saying if their sermon form remains the same.

6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

Yes. However many pastors probably do not know about learning styles. I'm sure that some are aware of this kind of thing and perhaps they incorporate their knowledge into their preaching. Can homiletics change to meet different educational schools? That would be awesome.



Name (first only) Jennifer
School of Learning: Pragmatism

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?

I learn best when someone walks me through the steps of learning, while I follow along. I learn best in small groups as opposed to large groups. A situation where questions can be asked alone the way is helpful.

2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?

Yes. It is easy for me to shut off or critique the teacher. I leave unsure of the lesson that was taught.

3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?

I assume they teach from their own learning style.

4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?

New Testament, epistles. Maybe they use these texts because there is more space for them to elaborate as they desire. Maybe because the points are clear and easier to get than other Biblical texts.

5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?

Yes but more often than not, especially in the modern setting, a pastor's sermon form tends to dictate Scripture. At least, that has been my church experience.

6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

It should, but they are too busy to even consider their own learning style, let alone the learning styles of those in their congregations.



Name (first only) Brett
School of Learning: Existentialism

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?

Through an authoritative presentation with examples and illustrations that relate personally to my life. I need time afterwards to reflect and connect with the content. This is vital for me if it is going to stick. Truth needs to touch my heart. Without doing this, it does not mean much.

2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?

Yes, I tend to tune out and do not invest time, emotion, or energy to participate. I have little patience for it.

3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?

I have two answers for this. (1) If the pastor is in-tune with post-modernity then, in my opinion he/she puts pictures on a screen, uses contemporary music, etc. The problem with this is that it all seems so secular. If I wanted secular I wouldn't be in church. (2) If the pastor is more modern they will preach at me. Their style tends to be cold, systematic, solution-oriented, and academic.

4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?

Old Testament: Genesis, Psalms, and Proverbs

New Testament: Gospels, Acts, and Romans

5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?

Yes, but pastors do not vary from their sermon form regardless of the Biblical text they preach from. I believe this is due to a pastor's comfort level.

6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

Yes, but Modern pastor: Does not change

Post-modern pastor: Changes but maybe too much. In order to try and hit everyone, they tend to hit no one.



Name (first only) Elise
School of Learning: Neo-Scholasticism

The interview will begin with a brief discussion that defines and summarizes the various educational schools of learning.

1) Can you describe to me how you learn best?

I learn best with a couple of people that I am comfortable with and get along with. It must be a safe environment. It is important to me that problems are surfaced and that space is created for me/team to work through the problem. Opinions/subjectivity are okay, but without truth things become relative and this is not an option for me. Truth exists and solid argumentation is the best method to get at it.

2) Is it difficult for you to learn from other schools of learning?

Yes, I think so for two reasons. (1) In my undergraduate classes, teachers encouraged personal thought but there was no guidance. In my opinion, this was a disaster. (2) I've been in large groups and have felt that I had no voice. This is frustrating to me and it affects my ability to learn.

3) What school of learning do pastors tend to preach from?

I am attracted to pastors that preach academic, exegetical to the point, hard-nosed sermons. I have heard fluff sermons and I do not like them. In essence, it has been my experience that pastors preach from their own learning style.

4) What passages do pastors tend to preach from?

New Testament, epistles, and a good measure of gospels, Jesus' life, parables, and topical sermons. Over the last five years I have noticed a shift to Old Testament narrative.

5) Should sermon form change based upon the text of Scripture?

Yes but sermon form never seems to change based on Scripture. It tends to be the same no matter what type of literature one is in.

6) Should sermon form change based upon the various learning styles within the church's congregation?

Yes, however pastors embrace their own style and the church becomes comfortable and familiar with it.

APPENDIX 4

EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST INTERVIEW

A blank educational specialist interview form and the educational specialist interview results are included.

Educational Expert Interview

Name _____

Educational Background _____

Occupational Background _____

- 1) First, how important are student's educational learning styles to the way they learn?
- 2) Second, is it important for teachers and students to familiarize themselves with their own learning styles?
- 3) Third, how important is it for students to grow in their ability to learn from different teaching styles?
- 4) Fourth, how could educational learning theory benefit church ministries?
- 5) How could educational learning theory benefit preaching?
- 6) How would you suggest I test my church to find out how they learn?
- 7) Based on our conversation, are there any important issues you believe I am missing or need to consider?

Educational Expert Interview

Name Andy Sears

Educational Background M.Ed. from George Fox University

Occupational Background For the last fifteen years, Andy has been a teacher, educator, and principal at a private Christian High School.

1) First, how important are student's educational learning styles to the way they learn? Critically important! It is bad for education in general that educators and students alike do not recognize their own learning styles. This lack of understanding results in teachers teaching through their own learning style. Students either get it or they don't. This can be frustrating for the students that do not get it. Teachers too often assume it is the student's responsibility to adjust in the classroom.

2) Second, is it important for teachers and students to familiarize themselves with their own learning styles?

Yes! Without familiarization to learning styles, teachers and students alike struggle. Teachers end up teaching out of their preferred learning style without consideration to the student or to the content of their subject. Students end up thinking the teacher is boring and irrelevant.

3) Third, how important is it for students to grow in their ability to learn from different teaching styles?

Very. Without this understanding and ability, learners become unbalanced. If they can only learn one way and their learning style associates with one area of learning then unbalance is the sure result.

4) Fourth, how could educational learning theory benefit church ministries?

Learning theory that intentionally related truth to experience would be huge! Post-moderns long to connect truth to their lives. If they are unable to do this then truth often has very little meaning. Many educators today believe that pragmatism should be the end of all education. I think this is taking things too far. I strive for a balanced and holistic education in this school.

5) How could educational learning theory benefit preaching?

Take Bloom's Taxonomy as an example. Bloom's is a great educational learning tool. Preachers could use this to go deeper. Too often sermons go no further than application. The application ends-up being surface-level as opposed to deeply felt and understood. If sermons went deeper on the cognitive level, then people would leave changed. Their feelings and actions would be markedly different.

6) How would you suggest I test my church to find out how they learn?

You could use DISC, Myer and Briggs, Uniquely You, etc. We use Uniquely You at our school. It integrates the best from DISC and Myer and Briggs. The result is that the staff understand themselves and one another better. This has been a great help to all of us, including our students.

7) Based on our conversation, are there any important issues you believe I am missing or need to consider?

Your church is filled with diverse learners. Train your staff and congregation about these issues and the impact educational learning styles has on everyone. The result will most likely be a greater appreciation by everyone for different teachings and learning styles.

APPENDIX 5

Sermons

Matthew 5:27-37; 7:13-27; 7:28-29 sermons in manuscript form are included.

Matthew 5:27-37

Homiletical Idea: Fidelity is to mark the people of God
Homiletical Purpose: Explain/Know

Pray

Open Matthew 5

We currently find ourselves in a series attempting to define for us what resurrected living looks like. This morning we continue in this series looking at Jesus' words in his Sermon on the mount.

We pick up in this sermon in Chapter 5 beginning in verse 27.

Read 5:27-29; 5:31-32; 5:33-37

Let us close in prayer!

I say this in jest, but I am also somewhat serious. I mean, talk about trigger words . . . In just eleven verses Jesus touches on adultery, divorce and vows.

At first, I considered breaking these three ideas into three sermons. This would allow us to drink deeply of each issue that Jesus addresses. And yet, as I studied, I realized that to do such a thing, to isolate adultery from divorce, or divorce from vows, or vows from adultery would be to miss the unity between these three sections.

Last week I mentioned that the refrain, "You have heard that it was said," works its way through this part of Jesus' sermon. It is found in verses:

Read 21; 27; 31; 33; 38; 43

This refrain clearly breaks this part of Jesus' sermon into six sections. And yet, notice where it is that this refrain changes a little:

Read 27 reads normal; 31; 33

Verses 31 and 33 don't stand alone the way they read. They seem to build upon what was said, beginning in verse 27. And then verses 38 and 43 go back to the normal refrain, "You have heard that it was said." And more than just change in the refrain, the content between these three sections comprise a unified theme that is different from the previous section – murder. And the following section – revenge.

Adultery, divorce and vows all have one thing in common. And that one thing is faithfulness/fidelity. In just eleven verses, Jesus preaches on a Kingdom, a people that are to be marked by faithfulness. And he uses adultery, divorce and vows, not as a definitive

work that defines faithfulness, but rather as a means to begin discussing and talking about what faithfulness is and how it works out of those who claim to be the people of God.

This clarification by Jesus was and still is helpful. For words can be confusing.

Story: dating Jen, picnic, river . . . basket, blanket, Sandy river, liquid-mud, talk river/creek . . .

This happens in politics all the time: What is sex? When does one actually consume marijuana? What does mission accomplished really look like?

It wasn't much different in Jesus' day. Religious leaders- Pharisees and scribes were constantly squabbling over what constituted adultery. They regularly made judgments about divorce being either righteous or unrighteous. They instituted layers, levels of vows that were similar to the increasing sincerity of Junior High challenges. You know, like: I dare you. Oh yeah, I double dog dare you. So what, I triple dog dare you. As if the addition of words magnifies one's seriousness, The Pharisees and scribes made vows and swore by all kinds of things to assure others of their sincerity.

They swore to: Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem, Their own heads. In fact, so much wrangling over words like adultery, divorce and vows occurred in Jesus' time, that lines and boundaries were drawn in order to clarify: This is adultery. This is not really adultery. This kind of divorce is permissible. This kind of divorce is not permissible. This vow you must keep. This vow you must really keep.

Such banter is not unfamiliar in church today is it?

And then Jesus comes along and says, "Hey, you're missing it. You are totally missing it!" "It's not about lines and boundaries." "It's not about what adultery is or isn't." "It's not about what makes divorce okay or not okay." "It's not about vows you have to keep and not keep." "This is the wrong focus. It's the wrong place to start." "The focus of these things, here and now, for God's people is faithfulness." "Let me tell you about it."

And the difference? The difference between a life of lines and boundaries and a life that is marked by faithfulness? Well it's the difference between a muddy river of confusion and a creek of clarity. It's the difference between religion and resurrected living. Faithfulness.

Read 5:27

Traditionally: if a married man or woman were to have sex with someone other than their spouse, it was understood that they had committed adultery.

Read 5:28

The Word “lust” here literally means: to have a strong sexual desire to do or to secure something. (Read 2 times) In other words, according to Jesus, adultery is not just sleeping with someone other than your spouse. According to Jesus, adultery is sexually desiring and securing in ones eye someone other than your spouse. And look at how Jesus words this.

Read 28.

Commits adultery in his heart. As though looking and thinking and fantasizing are not similar to adultery, or kind of like adultery, but actual adultery. As though in looking and in thinking and in fantasizing we bring into the chamber of our being another. And there, in our heart, our very heart, we engage in intercourse. And in so doing, we commit adultery. Now, at first glance, this sounds like crazy talk! “What is Jesus saying here?” “He couldn’t be serious!”

But that is before one pauses to consider the primacy of one’s heart throughout Scripture: It is in one’s heart that covenants reside. Our commitment to God occurs in our heart. Our covenant to wed happens in our heard. And it is on one’s heart that Jesus knocks, and in one’s heart that Jesus resides when welcomed in. According to Scripture, all that is believed and valued and loved in one way or another occurs within this mystical, spiritual, sacred place called the heart. And according to Jesus, lust brings a person into this place where we undress them, we have sex with them, and then we send them away. All in full view of this God we love and the covenants we have made, in our heart. This Jesus calls adultery.

“So what can we do?” “If this whole thing is as serious as Jesus seems to say it is, what do we do?”

Read 29-30

Now, it’s obvious that a person with one eye can lust just as easily as the one with two eyes. The one with one hand just as easily as the one with two hands. But the point Jesus is making is very clear. Do whatever it is that you need to do, so that you do not commit adultery.

You need to: Cut off a friendship with a certain someone – do it. Drive another way home from work to avoid a billboard – do it. Put a filter on your internet – do it. Get rid of internet – do it. Open up to your spouse, confess sin, memorize verses, stop flipping channels, quit watching movies – do it! Do it!

“Why?” To fill your life with lines and boundaries? To become a post-modern Pharisee or scribe? No.

We do these things in order to be a faithful people: Faithful to our God. Faithful to our spouse. And faithful to the co-worker, neighbor, friend, stranger, image that we have no right to sexually desire and secure in our heart. Where Christ and covenants dwell.

Faithfulness: It is salt and light. It is heaven on earth. It is resurrected living. Faithfulness.

Read 5:31

This was a common phrase during Jesus' time. It actually came from Deuteronomy 24:1 where it reads, "If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, he may write her a certificate of divorce." As you can imagine, with this description of grounds for divorce being so loose, divorce was not uncommon in the history of Israel, nor was it uncommon in Jesus' day.

It was allowed for just about anything: Spouse continually bothers you? Divorce. Spouse holds grudges? Divorce. Intimate times have no passion? Divorce. Fall out of love? Divorce. Disagreement in how to raise children? Divorce. Tired of being married? Divorce. So common was divorce, that Jesus' words must have seemed out of place.

Read 5:32

Now, there are all kinds of thoughts about what unchastity, or marital unfaithfulness is within this verse: One group of theologians believe it refers to a single act of adultery. Another group of theologians believe it refers to the period of betrothal . . . Another group of theologians believe it refers to marriage between near relatives. And yet another group of theologians believe it refers to continual promiscuity.

I don't believe this verse is intended to clearly define for us when divorce is to be allowed. It is clear that divorce is allowed when some kind of sexual unfaithfulness occurs. And yet, the intent of Jesus in this part of his sermon is not to qualify divorce as much as it is to disqualify divorce. And, Jesus' words here would have disqualified a major portion of divorces. Everything but sexual unfaithfulness.

"Really?" "What about abuse?"

Well, according to Jesus' words in this verse, in this sermon, no.: He's not saying, "Don't move out." He's not saying, "Don't get as far away as possible to insure the safety of yourself and your family." But divorce? No.

What if: You spouse continually bothers you? No. Your spouse holds grudges? No. Intimate times have no passion? No. You fall out of love? No. Disagree in how to raise children? No. Tired of being married? No.

Now, at first glance, this sounds like crazy talk! "What is Jesus saying here?" "He couldn't be serious!" But that is before one pauses to consider the primacy of marital covenant throughout Scripture:

In Genesis Chapter 2:24 it reads, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Biblically, in marriage, there

no longer exists two, but one flesh. One flesh, two people, but indivisible. For one flesh cannot be divided, it is impossible. Throughout the OT, the Lord uses marriage as the primary structure to describe his relationship with Israel. IN the NT, Jesus describes himself as the bridegroom and his followers as the bride. He speaks of a wedding that brings marital union between himself and his people. And in Ephesians Ch. 5. At the end of Paul's discourse on how husbands and wives are to relate, he says this, "This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church." In other words, from Genesis Ch 2 through the rest of scripture, marriage most intimately represents and displays to the world, what God and his relationship to his people looks like.

You might be thinking, "Yeah right, my marriage didn't look anything like God and his relationship to His people. It was horrible." Or, "Yeah right, my marriage didn't look anything like God and his relationship to his people. It is horrible."

Yet God's relationship to Israel and Christ's to the church has had and does have horrible moments as well: Disagreement, anger, bitterness, messiness, struggle, lack of passion, too much passion, etc. But the relationship continued and it continues.

Sometimes our marriages have nothing more to offer this world, than the fact that despite how horrible they can be, we are faithful: Faithful to our God. Faithful to our spouse. Faithful to our covenant of marriage. And this faithfulness?

It is salt and light. It is heaven on earth. It is resurrected living. Faithfulness.

Read 5:33-37

What vows have you made to the Lord? Vows to: worship him, live for him, serve him, spend time with him, to tithe to him. Have you been faithful to these vows? What vows have you made to people? Vows to: marriage, relate in purity, forgive, love, be on time, accomplish a task, do something, stop something.

Have you been faithful to these vows?

According to Jesus, we are to be so faithful to the words we speak, that our Yes and No are to be truth to those who hear. And in a world where vows are broken, bent, stretched, elaborated upon and flat out trampled – a people marked by faithfulness to their promises must be an exotic sight. It must taste a lot like salt. It must look like light. It must be something of Heaven on earth. For it is certainly what resurrected living looks like. And in a world where lust runs free and marriages break and vows hold no weight, faithfulness has to be, it just has to be a creek of clarity in the midst of a very muddy river called life.

As I studied this passage and wrote this sermon, my heart ached. I wanted to be faithful to Jesus' words and yet my heart has been breaking all week for those who might be labeled unfaithful by this sermon. For we are all unfaithful. We are an unfaithful people. And if you have been committing adultery, or you are divorced, or you are not true to

your words, I beg you not to think that you do not belong here. Because you do. Oh, how you belong here!

Hosea and Gomer... Despite our unfaithfulness, God is faithful.

Story John Chapter 21... He comes to us, calls us, feeds us, because he is faithful.

And his faithfulness, it rubs off on us: It motivates us to work on our lust. It causes us to initiate reconciliation on whatever level is possible with past relationships. It encourages us to promise less often and to fulfill our promises more often. And together in community, our faithful God grows a faithful people that think different, relate different and speak different. For truly, the faithfulness of Christ calls us to such living.

Pray.

Matthew 7:13-27

Homiletical Idea: Today is a day of choosing

Homiletical Purpose: Apply/Do

Pray

Open Matthew 7

Have you ever felt uncomfortable when forced to make a decision surrounded by witnesses? Like at a restaurant, when a waiter visits your table five times in five minutes asking for your order. On one hand, I want to make a good decision . . . but on the other hand, there is a waiter and everyone else with menus closed . . . This makes me uncomfortable.

Have you ever been mobbed at the entrance of a grocery store by girl scouts selling cookies? They strategically engulf you with smiles and boxes. Just off to the side are their parents in lawn chairs not close enough to sell the cookies themselves, but close enough to act as a jury that deems you guilty of being a jerk for saying no thank you. This makes me uncomfortable.

The other night, Jen and I went to Hollywood Video and rented a movie. At the counter we were asked if we wanted to donate 25 cents. Part of the 25 cents went to protecting our rental. The other part went to help seriously ill children and their families cope with pain, fear and isolation through entertainment. In that moment, I shrunk into a Petri dish and the gal at the counter, the line behind me looked at me through a microscope wondering if I would spare 25 cents or hoard it unto myself. At least that's how I felt. And it made me uncomfortable.

When we began this sermon series I likened the life of Moses to Matthew Chapters 1-7: Moses: Pharaoh killing children. Jesus: Herod . . . Moses: Refuge in heart of Egypt. Jesus' parents fled to Egypt Moses: Out of Egypt, Moses brought Salvation to Israel. Jesus: Out of Egypt Jesus came bringing salvation. Moses and Israel were tempted in the desert. Jesus was tempted in the desert. Moses went up to Mt. Sinai and from there brought the law to God's people. Jesus goes up onto a mountain and from there reinterprets Moses' law to God's people. And this morning we found another similarity.

Near the end of Moses' retelling of the law in Deuteronomy Ch. 27-28, he commands 6 tribes to go onto Mt. Gerazim in order to pronounce the blessing that will . . . And on an opposing mountain, Mt. Ebal, he commands the other 6 tribes to go and pronounce the curses that will . . . These two mountains were to be witnesses to Israel's obedience or disobedience, to their faithfulness or their fruitlessness. The life of Moses ends with two mountains as witness to Israel's decision. What would they do based upon what they have heard?

Jesus' sermon ends in similar fashion: 2 ways; 2 trees; 2 claims; 2 foundations; 4 paired contrasts, witness to our decision. What will we do based upon what we have heard?

(Left of room) Will we find ourselves standing on Mount Gerazim, blessed by our response to Jesus' sermon?

(Right of room) Or will we find ourselves standing on Mount Ebal, cursed by our response to Jesus' sermon?

Your answer to these questions will be found in the verses we will look at this morning. And it may be somewhat uncomfortable . . . But it is biblical and faithful to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Read 7:13-14

In these verses, Jesus describes two gates: One gate is wide and leads to a road that is easy to travel. The other gate is narrow and leads to a road that is difficult to travel. And in the beginning of verse 13, Jesus commands, imperative tense, he commands his listeners to travel the narrow, more difficult path that leads to life.

What is the narrow, more difficult path? Well according to context, it is everything Jesus has stated in his sermon up to this point. Review notes in bible Ch. 5-7 . . . SKIP BEATITUDES. These things. This sermon, is the narrow and difficult path Jesus is imploring us to travel. And to live like this. To value these things. It is hard. But it is so, so good. Read 13-14. Story Keith Green, No Compromise . . . Every X-Mas . . . Father-in law . . . He makes a good point. Not everyone . . . And yet, at some point, if living out and valuing Jesus' words in this sermon do not create conflict, if they never cause sacrifice or adjustment, if blood does not ever pour or sweat ever drop, we must ask ourselves, which path are we on.

What mountain are we standing on? (Left) Mount Gerazim, the narrow/difficult path. Or (right) Mount Ebal, the wide/easy path. With these mountains as your witness, where do you stand?

Dog Mountain: hard spectacular...Powell Butte: simple Gresham...

Read 15-20

Notice that the fruit Jesus speaks of in these verses is not your fruit or my fruit. This is not the individual fruit Jesus speaks of bearing in John chapter 15 . . . Rather, he is speaking of the fruit that is produced by false prophets. In other words, Jesus is warning his listeners to discern true prophets from false prophets, by evaluating their fruit.

This raises the question, "What is the fruit of a prophet?" Well, biblically speaking, the role of a prophet was to speak/proclaim a message from God to a people. With this definition, Jesus is exhorting his listeners to discern the messages that prophets were

proclaiming. It seems as though this exhortation can be appropriately considered on a couple levels.

One level includes those who claim to present God's word, His message to you. This would include those who come and knock on your door, to those you watch on TV, to his message you are listening to right now. You must turn to the passages that are being proclaimed and discern whether they are true or false. Especially in light of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. A familiar message proclaimed over the last 20 years is called prosperity gospel. This gospel is pulled from a few verses here and there in the Bible and proclaims that if you love the Lord and Live by faith, that you will some upon wealth and experience health. It is a powerful message! Many have believed it. Many have given their lives to it. Many books have been written to support it. But it is bad fruit from false prophets.

Just compare it to Jesus' sermon: Rejoice when you are persecuted 5:12. Today is filled with trouble 6:34. The gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life. 7:14

False messages can really mess you up. I once met a man convinced his brother was terminally ill because he lacked the necessary faith to heal him. Could you imagine? The guilt. The shame. The inappropriate burden by believing a lie? We must be careful about the messages we hear and adhere to.

And this brings up another level by which this exhortation can be appropriately considered. Not just biblical messages, but any messages. False messages are dangerous: Story of Katie and bulimia . . . False messages are dangerous. Allowing the world, its culture and its values to define for us: Riches. Beauty. Success. Purpose. Fun All of these messages and definitions that come to us through work and friends and movies and music and news must be – they just must be held up and evaluated through the gospel Jesus brings in this Sermon on the Mount (look at beatitudes . . .)

As you consider the messages you have heard and come to believe, what mountain do you find yourself standing upon?

(left) Mt Gerazim, the truth wrapped up in Jesus and his gospel?

(right) Or Mt Ebal, the lies, wrapped up in this world and its gospel?

Read 21-23

Let me begin by saying that these 3 verses are hard core in light of modernity which has boiled the gospel down to 4 spiritual laws. Read vs 21. In other words, one is not guaranteed eternal life by praying a prayer. I'll say it again . . . "What, you're saying confessing Jesus as Lord does not make someone a believer?" No I am not saying that. Jesus is saying it.

Read 21

Jesus seems to be promulgating a similar message here to that of James in his book. Faith without deeds is dead. One cannot confess Jesus as Lord and then fail to surrender his or her life to him as Lord. If you and I really believe and call out “Lord, Lord” Then our lives will be altered by Jesus’ Lordship. If you and I really believe and call out “Lord, Lord” Then our lives will be orientated by Jesus’ words in this sermon. If you and I really believe and call out “Lord, Lord” Then we will surrender our ways and our wills to Jesus ways and Jesus’ will. The next two verses basically say the same thing with a little different emphasis.

Read 22

Here we not only see people proclaiming “Lord, Lord.” But also doing many deeds of power . . . But notice verse 23

Read 23

The NAS interprets this verse most literally: “Then I will declare to them, “I never knew you and depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.” In other words, confessing Jesus as Lord and doing powerful deeds in his name do not atone for a life lived in lawlessness. Because authentic, legitimate, genuine confession of Jesus as Lord, insists upon surrendering our lives and our wills, our paradigm and our values to Jesus.

To be clear, Jesus is not saying that if you sin, you are not saved. Abundant grace and free forgiveness are found here for your sins. And yet, if your life is marked by lawlessness more than it is by Jesus’ words in this sermon, you must question Lordship in your life. And as you consider Lordship in your life, which mountain do you find yourself standing upon?

(left) Mt Gerazim . . .

(right) Mt Ebal . . .

Read 24-27

Everyone is building a house with their life: Every breath, every word, every act continues the building . . . a window here . . . Extraordinary homes . . . And every house looks like . . . developer buys 2 acres . . . But you know, you can tell a lot about the quality of one’s work when storms blow through. And life is filled with storms: Trial; Temptation; Sickness; The ill –will of others; Injustice; Systemic evil... This list goes on and on of storms that blow through our lives. And when storms blow through your life, what is revealed?

Have you been building your house upon rock? When difficulty comes your way does total obedience, true righteousness, kingdom living and radical submission to Jesus as Lord according to this Sermon on the Mount describe you?

Or have you been building your house upon sand? When difficulty comes your way do you find that you have been walking the wide path, listening and believing false messages, claiming Jesus as Lord but not living with Jesus as Lord and therefore sink? Sink, as though you are in quicksand and life crashes over your head like waves as you gasp for air and life. Storms can knock down the most exquisite of houses, if they are but built upon rock.

Every moment of every day you are building: In your bed. In your car. In your conversations. In your decisions. In your dreams. In your recreation. Every moment of every day you are building.

What foundation are you building upon? How do you need to change? What do you need to stop? What do you need to start? What decisions, thought patterns, belief systems need to be altered? To get you from this mountain – a place of dread and death and curses – to this mountain – a place of freedom and life and blessings?

Time to reflect . . .

I warned you this would be uncomfortable . . . but it is biblical. And we would be remiss if we didn't seriously consider Jesus' words, at this point in his sermon, with sobriety.

More time to reflect...

Prayer

Matthew 7:28-29

Homiletical Idea: Jesus' words must absolutely amaze you and inspire you.

Homiletical Purpose: Prove/Feel

Pray

Open Matthew 7

Read 7:28-29

Have you ever been amazed? Perhaps by someone, or by something? Amazement is powerful isn't it? In English, amazement is defined as a feeling of great surprise or wonder. In Greek, the language of the NT, amazement is defined as the point, the very center of being overwhelmed and astounded. Some synonyms for amazement: Astonishment, speechlessness, awe, wonder, even inspiration. And while definitions and synonyms help us to better understand this word, amazement, the act of being amazed is almost impossible to quantify.

Like a 5 year old child meeting Santa Claus at the mall for the first time. Sitting on the very lap of the one who has the capability to give her anything in the world that her heart desires. How do you define the amazement in her heart?

Every once in a while I find myself watching Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. This is a television show that always begins by telling the story of a family in need: Dad is injured and can't work. They have like 9 kids. 4 kids are from friends and family that were unable to care for their own. So this family took them in. Mom, between caring for her husband, 9 kids and running the non-profit down the street is at the end of her rope. And the house they live in is decrepit . . . Then in rolls a bus filled with beautiful superstars of architecture, construction and design. They send the family away, demolish the house, build a mansion in its place, customize each room for each family member, stuff it with Sears furniture and Ford automobiles and then bring the family back to see their new home. As contrived as this all seems and kind of is. In that moment when everyone shouts "Move that bus!" And the bus rolls away. The crowd erupts. The family crumbles in tears. In that moment, I admit, I feel amazement. At the house, at the family, at all who gave of their time and energy – At the moment, I feel amazement. My heart thuds. My eyes water. Jen and I look at each other and just want to cry and hug. 5 minutes later I feel like an idiot. Amazement.

In 1962 Alexander Solzenitsen's work, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich made its way to the public eye. Set in a Soviet labor camp in the 1950s, it describes a single day in the life of an ordinary prisoner. This story was a scathing indictment of communist tyranny and shook the world with its candor. The response? Amazement. Amazement at humankind's wickedness. Amazement at humankind's strength.

Just for a moment, imagine yourself in Washington DC amidst a throng of 200,000 people standing at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963 and hearing these words at the height of the American Civil Rights Movement: “I have a Dream.” Amazement.

It is difficult to define but it is easily felt. And more than just a feeling, amazement. Authentic, undiluted amazement inspires. It inspires: Little children to sit on the lap of a total stranger and to ask for the moon. Hundreds of volunteers to build a mansion for a needy family. The powerful to act and the weak to find meaning in things as simple as food and work and charity in the midst of a malevolent Soviet regime. A nation of diverse races to coexist harmoniously as equals. Amazement is not only powerfully felt, but it powerfully inspires.

Question: “What are you amazed by? Another way to ask the same thing: What inspires you? Why do you wake up in the morning? What do you dream about, talk about, spend money on and schedule to do throughout your week?” Notice what Matthew points out as amazing to those listening to Jesus’ sermon.

Read 28

There are two ways to interpret this phrase, “amazed at his teaching.” One way is to understand that the crowd was amazed by the activity of Jesus’ sermon. That his mannerisms, his movement, his pitch, pace, pause, punch were eloquently delivered – wowing the crowd.

Another way to interpret this phrase is to understand that the crowd was amazed by the content of Jesus’ sermon. That the words he spoke, the meaning he communicated was amazing to the crowd.

Matthew does not once refer to Jesus activity other than saying, “He went up on the mountain and sat down” at the beginning of the sermon. He never makes note of Jesus raising or softening his voice, pacing side to side, gesturing his arms, etc. Matthew only records the content of Jesus’ sermon.

Therefore it stands to reason that the crowds were amazed not by how Jesus preached but rather by what Jesus preached – by his words.

And his words were amazing. Counterintuitive, to his culture, to his people, to his Jewish, religious tradition. Jesus words were fresh and poignant and relevant – Amazing.

Through his words: The poor are rich. The sad are comforted. The meek are owners of land. The merciful receive mercy. The pure in heart see God. The peacemakers are called children of God. The persecuted receive the kingdom of heaven. Through his words: People become salt and light. Through his words, salt and light are defined as: Speaking kind words. Pursuing reconciliation . . . Remaining faithful to covenants and vows. Being charitable . . . Praying for the Lord’s will. Not worrying . . . Through his words, every moment of every day is monumental: For there are two: Paths to walk on. Two kinds of

prophets to discern between. Two claims on eternal life. Two foundations to build upon. And when Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at his teaching.

Do Jesus' words in his sermon amaze you? Do they inspire you? Do you: Wake up in the morning thinking about them? Dream about them? Talk about them? Spend your money according to them? Schedule your days and live your life oriented by them? Do they inspire you?

All too often, my answer to these questions is no. I mean, I want to be amazed. I wish I were amazed. But I've found that I live in a world filled with amazing things.

Story of college Dean . . . You know Mike, this generation, this post-modern era is often defined as one filled with apathy. But it's just the opposite and its representative of us all. We're not under stimulated, we're over stimulated. We're not unexcited, we're overly excited. The status quo for daily living is highly sensational. So sensational, that it seems as though nothing at all is inspirational to any of us.

And you know, he might be right. So many things today are amazing: Cars and homes. Toys and gadgets. Television shows and movies. Even commercials are amazing. If you can't have it, you can at least see it. Men and women – start, heroes, politicians. Sex. Things you would like to purchase. And if you can't see it, you can hear it: Music. Radio shows. Speeches and sermons. All available at the click of a finger. All things amazing are made readily available to each of us. And so it makes sense that we are not as amazed and enthralled by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as we probably should be.

For Jesus is just one man among billions of men. Jesus' sermon is just one sermon among millions of sermons. Jesus is just one messiah among thousands of self-proclaimed messiahs. And yet, there was something and still is something that separates Jesus as a man, as a preacher, and as messiah that makes him and his words in this sermon unequivocally amazing in his day and in our day too.

Read 28-29

According to Matthew, the crowds were amazed by Jesus' words because he had a different kind of authority. The crowd was used to hearing their religious leaders: Speak in third person. Jesus spoke in first person. Cite other authorities. Jesus cited himself. Pass on received tradition. Jesus redirected tradition to the heart and soul that composed it in the first place. Jesus is not an ordinary teacher who says "Thus says the Lord!" Rather, he speaks in the first person and claims that his teaching fulfills the OT; that he determines who enters the messianic kingdom; that as the Divine Judge he pronounces banishment; that the true heirs of the kingdom would be persecuted for their allegiance to him; and that he alone fully knows the will of his Father. Truly, Jesus taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

But more than this contrast in authority between Jesus and the religious leaders, Matthew goes on to define Jesus' authority as a theme in his book. Before we look at it, let me ask

you: What are some words we would use to describe the kind of authority we observe today?

(Open for words from the congregation)

In the Greek, the word authority is defined as: Having the resources and command to control and govern with might and power. It's all about commanding and controlling with might and power. And yet, notice the distinct contrast to this definition in Jesus authority throughout Matthew.

Read: 9:6 “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home.

Here Jesus displays power and authority to let people know he forgives sin. This is a very different kind of authority.

Read: 9:8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Here we see that God the Father receives the honor and glory because of Jesus' authority, not Jesus. This is a very different kind of authority.

Read: 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Here Jesus gives his disciples authority to hear and in so doing, the sick and unclean and disenfranchised are able to rejoin their community as clean. This is a very different kind of authority.

In chapter 27, Jesus uses his authority to be crucified in order to demonstrate love and save sinners. This is a very different kind of authority.

In the beginning of chapter 28, this same authority is used to raise him from the dead, giving everyone the hope of life. This is a very different kind of authority.

And in: 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth . . . Here Jesus disperses his authority to his followers to go and bring: Forgiveness to sinners.

Glory to God. Healing to the broken. Community to the lonely. And life to the dead. This is a very different kind of authority isn't it? Jesus' authority is not subjugation, it is freedom. It is not isolating, it is unifying. It is not controlling, it is missional. Jesus authority invites us to participate in what he is doing throughout this world. Reshaping it, in his image.

And in a world where authority means: Control. Manipulation. Self preservation. And self adulation. Jesus' authority is amazing.

Read 28-29

A couple of months ago I listened to Dr. King's speech, or I would call it sermon titled, "I have a Dream" in its entirety for the first time. I would like to play a piece of it for you this morning. Just for a moment, imagine yourself in Washington DC amidst a throng of 200,00 people standing at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963 and hearing these words at the height of the American Civil Rights Movement:

Play the speech...

As I listened to this sermon at the airport returning from a trip, I became overwhelmed, even amazed by Dr. King's words. I found myself quoting the parts of his sermon I knew and longing with him for the reality he painted with his words. I was inspired by his dream. After listening to him, if you would have asked me to go or do, give or become something/anything I would have asked you how much, how far, how long – I will do anything to participate in making this dream reality. And you know what I have come to realize in the last few months? As I have listened to Dr. King's sermon and studied and preached Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? They are dreaming the same dream. Biblical, God-centered, Christ-oriented dreams. In fact, if you just changed Jesus' words a little, you might be more inclined to hear the similarities. Just for a moment, imagine yourself in Jerusalem amidst a throng of hundreds of people, sitting at the foot of a mountain 2 millennia ago, at the height of the Roman empire and in the midst of a world's desperate cry for a messiah. And then Jesus, the very word of God made flesh, king of kings, Lord of lords, sits before you and begins to preach:

"I have a dream. Of a kingdom filled with people who speak kindly to one another. I have a dream. Of a kingdom filled with people that reconcile broken relationships and fractured systems. I have a dream. Of a kingdom filled with benevolent, charitable people that reach out to and care for the needy. I have a dream. Of a kingdom that tastes like salt and looks like light. That brings Forgiveness to sinners, Glory to God, Healing to the broken, Community to the lonely, And life to the dead. I have a dream.

Read 7:28-29

Let us pray: And so we ask Lord, how much, how far, how long – we will do anything to participate in making this dream, your dream – our dream. Oh God amaze us, inspire us by your words in this sermon that we may enact and build the kingdom your son began. For ourselves. For our spouse. For our children. For our relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers. The next generation, for generations to come. Save us from amazing and inspiring ourselves with our own dreams. Empower us to join your dream for it is better than life. Amen.

APPENDIX 6

SERMON INTERVIEWS

A blank sermon interview form and the sermon interview results are included.



Name (first only) _____
School of Learning:

The interview will begin with a brief summary of each sermon, followed by six questions.

Matthew 5:27-37

- 1) what did you appreciate about this sermon?
- 2) What didn't you appreciate?
- 3) What was helpful?
- 4) What was unhelpful?
- 5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?
- 6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Matthew 7:13-27

- 1) what did you appreciate about this sermon?
- 2) What didn't you appreciate?
- 3) What was helpful?
- 4) What was unhelpful?
- 5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?
- 6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Matthew 7:28-29

- 1) what did you appreciate about this sermon?
- 2) What didn't you appreciate?

3) What was helpful?

4) What was unhelpful?

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Please rank these sermons from favorite to least favorite in relation to overall impact:

_____ Matthew 5:27-37

_____ Matthew 7:13-27

_____ Matthew 7:28-19



Name (first only) Rachel
School of Learning: Idealist

The interview will begin with a brief summary of each sermon, followed by six questions.

Matthew 5:27-37

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

I loved this sermon. It was Biblical, insightful, and personally fruitful.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

3) What was helpful?

Being called an adulterer was good for me. Your clear points that connected to the text.

4) What was unhelpful?

The entire thing was solid.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

The didactic approach. Not backing down from what the Word says. You spoke with authority and it was necessary for the content of this passage.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

All solid.

Matthew 7:13-27

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

This sermon was okay. Some parts of the sermon were very good. I liked the part where you contrasted the four images.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

Overall I appreciated this sermon.

3) What was helpful?

Calling us to respond, a direct challenge to apathy was helpful.

4) What was unhelpful?

The contrasted images were helpful and unhelpful. They were helpful in that they clarified the choices that needed to be made. They were unhelpful in that they seemed

more feeling oriented than thinking oriented. They seemed more like an emotional ploy than a logical one.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

Your sermon came across like four homilies. I think it helped make the points clear. Connecting this passage to Deuteronomy established credibility and authority.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

As far as I can remember, it all seemed necessary.

Matthew 7:28-29

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

I hated this sermon. It was a bunch of fluff and too feeling to say anything of meaning.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

The whole thing. I remember thinking, "Get on with it, get on with it!" Your point dragged out.

3) What was helpful?

Honestly, not much.

4) What was unhelpful?

I need content to feel, not feelings to feel. You appealed to feelings and it did nothing for me.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

Your outline was clear. I sensed progress the entire time, though it was slow.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

The overall purpose to make me feel felt unnecessary. Speak to my mind and if what you say makes sense, then I will be moved in my emotions and my behavior.

Please rank these sermons from favorite to least favorite in relation to overall impact:

First _____ Matthew 5:27-37

Second Matthew 7:13-27

Third _____ Matthew 7:28-19



Name (first only) Jennifer
School of Learning: Pragmatist

The interview will begin with a brief summary of each sermon, followed by six questions.

Matthew 5:27-37

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

Honestly, there was very little for me to appreciate about this sermon. I appreciated the clarity but it lacked application throughout. I found myself asking “so what?” the entire time.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

The lack of application. All of the details and definitions without the relevance.

3) What was helpful?

Yes, my mind was engaged.

4) What was unhelpful?

Though my mind was engaged, my actions weren't.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

The structure of your sermon was easy to follow. The points were solid.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Truth minus application. The sermon left me feeling like I needed time to process what you preached so that I could consider application for myself.

Matthew 7:13-27

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

I thoroughly enjoyed this sermon. It was relevant and applicable.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

I appreciated what I can recall.

3) What was helpful?

Yes. It was easy to connect what you were saying to me personally. You suggested application that connected truth to my life.

4) What was unhelpful?

Nothing I can recall.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

The questions you led with as we pondered possible responses was great. I came-up with tangible application and changed behavior based on that time at the end.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Nothing I can recall.

Matthew 7:28-29

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

I thought this sermon was okay. You overstated the point and made it too feely in nature.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

The repetition and length. The sermon never really went anywhere.

3) What was helpful?

Creativity and illustrations were good.

4) What was unhelpful?

Too much time to make a point. Too much focus on feelings and being amazed.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

What you were trying to do seems necessary to me. It just seems like you went about it the wrong way.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

The length, illustrations, and pace all seemed long-winded.

Please rank these sermons from favorite to least favorite in relation to overall impact:

Second Matthew 5:27-37

First _____ Matthew 7:13-27

Third _____ Matthew 7:28-19



Name (first only) Brett
School of Learning: Existentialist

The interview will begin with a brief summary of each sermon, followed by six questions.

Matthew 5:27-37

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

This sermon was okay. I'd call it a middle of the road sermon for you. I was able to connect with the imagery on an emotional level and this was good for me.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

I had a difficult time connecting with the details in this sermon. All of the information about covenants, etc. seemed like too much detail.

3) What was helpful?

The images you painted with your words were really helpful. They caught my attention and made me feel what you were saying.

4) What was unhelpful?

Details!

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

You stated some of your points more than once. I felt like this helped me catch your important points.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

At times, your sermon felt laborious. Details, explanations, etc. made it feel this way to me.

Matthew 7:13-27

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

This sermon was okay. Again, I would consider this a middle of the road sermon for you. With that said, near the end of the sermon I was gripped with feeling. I actually got goose-bumps.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

Quick points, simple summaries, and unpacking "fear" was all very insightful.

3) What was helpful?

Stating what I needed to start and what I needed to stop was helpful. It didn't connect to me emotionally, but after I thought about different action/behavior in my life in relation to your sermon, I felt moved by it.

4) What was unhelpful?

There were times that I felt challenged by truth before you helped me to feel the truth. I think you moved too fast in these places.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

The reflection time at the end. Considering the gospel as a worldview.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Overall nothing felt unnecessary. It just seemed that you expected application too soon.

Matthew 7:28-29

1) What did you appreciate about this sermon?

I think this was the best sermon you have ever preached. I loved and appreciated every single part of it.

2) What didn't you appreciate?

There was not one thing I didn't appreciate about this sermon. It was very stirring.

3) What was helpful?

The imagery, illustrations, MLK speech – all incredible.

4) What was unhelpful?

Nothing.

5) What did you feel was necessary in the sermon?

Spurring feeling inside of me as a listener was the perfect method to get me to apply truth.

6) What did you feel was unnecessary in the sermon?

Nothing.

Please rank these sermons from favorite to least favorite in relation to overall impact:

Third _____ Matthew 5:27-37

Second Matthew 7:13-27

First _____ Matthew 7:28-19

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